

*The History  
of a  
Southern Presbyterian Family  
by  
Dr. L. J. Wilson*

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DR. L. J. WILSON

# History of a Southern Presbyterian Family.

BY

DR. L. J. WILSON.





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TO THE DESCENDANTS OF

STEPHEN WILSON

AND

DR. NICHOLA JOSEPH BOURDON,

MY FATHER'S AND MOTHER'S KINDRED IN OLD VIRGINIA, AND ES-

PECIALLY MISS MARIA ATKINSON, MISSIONARY IN JAPAN,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS PRAYERFULLY AND

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

AUTHOR.

Walter Jell \$5.00 2.4.65 phone



# INTRODUCTORY.

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I have read Dr. L. J. Wilson's little book with pleasure. I cheerfully speak in its behalf a word of commendation.

The book is simply a sketch of the Wilson family for something more than one hundred years, covering probably six generations. While it is unpretentious, being only seventeen short chapters, the author has performed an invaluable service for the offsprings of his father's family, who are now numerous.

The motive for writing this volume is found in the author's desire to leave in permanent form the main facts of his father's family for the benefit of the younger generations, now coming on.

The family came from French and English stock. Stephen Wilson, Dr. L. J. Wilson's great-grandfather, came to Virginia from England about 1730, and settled on James River, Dr. Nicholas Joseph Bourdon, Dr. Wilson's mother's father, came from France to America in time of the Revolutionary War, as surgeon in the French Navy. After the war, he settled in Dinwiddie county, Va., married, and practiced his profession. From this stock, the Wilson family sprang.

From generations back, the family have been industrious, intelligent and religious. In professions, they have been teachers and physicians; in church affiliations,

they have been usually of the Presbyterian faith and order. It affords me great pleasure to state that, in all these respects, the author is true to his ancestral lineage.

May the noble deeds of these forefathers inspire the sons and daughters of rising generations to live lives full of good works; lives that will bring honor to their noble sires.

D. H. COLQUETTE,

*Pastor Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Alma, Arkansas.*

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# History of a Southern Presbyterian Family.

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## CHAPTER I.

### REASONS FOR WRITING—OUTLINES OF THE FAMILY.

As I am the last of my father's family, my brothers and sisters having all preceded me to the spirit land, I feel that I ought to write up the history of the family, for the benefit of my own children, the children of my dead brothers and sisters, and their numerous offspring.

Many of them have requested me to do this, but I have heretofore shrunk from the task, for it is, indeed, a task at my time of life. The family is a large one now, and scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Gulf to Colorado; I can count up more than two hundred, and there are many that I have never seen nor heard of, a host of young people coming on, and if I can inspire the young to emulate the good deeds of their forefathers, strengthen the faith of the older ones, help and encourage them in the battle of life, I may accomplish some good. Forty years ago, the family were all living within a radius of fifty miles of Memphis, Tenn. But the great change that had come over the South, causing great changes in communities and family circles, had its effects upon this, and we were soon scattered abroad, and without such a history, the young and rising generation who are spread-

ing out over the earth, and obeying the command, "Increase and multiply," will know little of their blood kin, or less or nothing of the source from whence they sprang.

Some may think this of little importance, but the old adage, "Blood is thicker than water," holds good to-day, and will continue to do so. Blood, good blood, is more prized to-day than ever before in the history of the world, in stock, in horses, cattle, and man. The American who can trace his family back to a signer of the Declaration of Independence, is truly proud of the fact, and well he may be. I have been told, that in certain portions of our country, in North and South Carolina, it is still a stain, a blot, to belong to, or marry into, a family whose ancestors were Tories in the days of the Revolution. So it is of some importance to know from whence we sprang, something of our ancestors. I had much rather know I was the descendant of a good man than a bad man.

Another reason why I should write this history, is, that I know some facts in the early history of my father and grandfather that no one else now remembers, and which I believe ought to be on record for the benefit of the young, rising generation of the family, for their study and emulation.

The family is remarkable in several respects. First, very few had the advantage of a college education, yet, I never met one who did not have a plausible academic education, and was qualified for any ordinary vocation in life. Second, I never knew one to be rich; I never heard of one begging bread. I have never seen nor heard of one being arraigned before the courts of the country for any crime or misdemeanor. I never heard of one being sent to the hospital for any capital operation, to the blind or insane asylum, and but *one* to the State Legislature. I never heard of but one who would get drunk,

and he was not a drunkard, or an habitual drinker, but occasionally would take too much, and fall by the wayside, and cause a great deal of sorrow and mortification. The family have always been right on the temperance question. Politically, all were Whigs up to 1860; since that time Democrats. I never knew one to hold office, except as a teacher, director in the public schools, or as an officer in the Church of God. The family have always been farmers, doctors, and educators, and I suppose that surrounding circumstances led them, or induced them to choose one of these equally noble and honorable professions. My grandfather was a physician and surgeon, my father, a teacher and farmer; oldest brother, a physician and surgeon; second brother, teacher and druggist; third brother, teacher, farmer and lawyer, and Greek professor in the High School of his county when he died. The writer commenced as a teacher, but chose medicine as his life profession; oldest sister was a teacher all of her life; the second never taught, but was of a literary turn of mind, an inveterate reader, and took great interest in the education of her children; the third was a fine musician, and taught music in the public schools, and privately all her life; the fourth was also a musician, and taught on the piano and guitar all her life, first in public schools, and latterly her own daughters and the young ladies of her vicinity.

Another striking peculiarity of the family is its deep religious character, not a skeptic or infidel to be found in it in a space of a hundred years. And 75 per cent. of all to-day over fifteen years of age are church members of strong Calvinistic type, regardless of church affiliations, but not a preacher of the Gospel in the list, the strangest thing of all! Had we not better pause for a

moment, and enquire, if we are not all preachers. Are not our daily *lives* sermons, before the world, "Epistles read and known of all men"? One consecrated Christian life in a community is worth volumes of brilliant sermons. How are we preaching? "This "bird's-eye" view of the family gives ample food for thought to Christian parents, and they might learn a lesson of value in regard to the *early* training of the *children* that are coming on, that would produce a change for the better in the history of the family fifty years hence. The methods in use fifty years ago have changed very much, and are gradually and slowly changing as the years pass by, and I fear the result upon the "coming man."

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it," was true in the days of Solomon, was true in the days of our fathers, and will be true to the end of time. "He that spareth the rod spoileth the child," is equally true, but we find that the rod is a thing of the past; has been driven from the chamber, the nursery, and even the school room; and it has become a high crime for a teacher to punish a disobedient, gainsaying boy in the old-fashioned, orthodox way, and he must gain some kind of hypnotic influence over his mind, and thus control the "bad boy."

Can any one foretell the effect these radical changes are to produce upon the characters of the boys and girls, the men and women of the future?

## CHAPTER II.

## ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY.

I am indebted to my niece, Mrs. Kate Holden, for four letters written by my father to her father, R. N. J. Wilson, when he was a young man studying law, giving at his request the early history of the family. These letters are of great value, and will be read with interest by his descendants as it is the only history of our ancestors on my father's side, and throws some valuable light upon the habits and customs of the people of old Virginia (the mother of us all), at an early day.

The historical part of the letters I transcribe *verbatim*, as follows:

WALL HILL, MISS., April 2d, 1857.

My dear son Nicholas:

I am in debt to you for two letters, both of which I will now in part try to answer. To your first, relative to your determination to study law as a profession, I cannot but say I am well pleased. Law as a science will be pleasing to you, I know, but when you come down to the application of those great principles of right and justice, in what is called the "Practice of law," I am persuaded you will be disgusted with such a display of little, low, cunning, duplicity, ignorance, evasion, and want of moral virtue, as to turn you away. It does not of necessity follow, that all who enter into the practice of law, should condescend to such a degraded course, and I am assured you cannot. Your moral sense of rectitude, imbibed from, and sustained by that eternal and immutable

code of omnipotence and wisdom, the "Bible," will never permit you, for a moment, to entertain such a degraded course. Again, the business of law office, the confinement to books, to writing, and all the labor of making up cases, examination of authorities and statutes, will be greater perhaps than you are aware of, and then the time you of necessity must "suck your paws" before you can make character, to earn your bread ("the doom of every professional man") may fatigue you. I don't say these things to discourage or dishearten you, but that you may look them full in the face and summon up fortitude to overcome them all, and to enter the profession determined to sustain it in that high and exalted position it of right in society holds, and by a correspondent exhibit of all character in you, never suffer a dime to prostitute you to any low, or dishonorable course in tactics to conquer! Remember the old adage, "Honesty is the best policy." The subject of your last letter, is one of interest to me, and has been for a number of years, but how to arrange and embody the information of the family genealogy to my descendants, has been the difficulty. The time is so short, and the facts so scarce, as to amount to a mere point. I am now the eldest one of the Wilson family of which you are a descendant, and I presume, know more of the family, than any living person, and as you manifest such anxiety on the subject, I have determined to gratify your desire to the best of my ability.

Stephen Wilson, the root of my family, my grandfather, came to Virginia from England early in the 18th century, perhaps as early as 1730 (for his family was grown up to manhood by the breaking out of the War with Great Britain in 1775), and settled on James River in the vicinity of old Jamestown, where he married a lady by the name of Ragsdale. At the commencement



of the trouble with the mother country, he removed to the back settlements of the whites, to Nottoway River, which was then, as I heard his oldest son say, the dividing line between the Indians and whites in Dinwiddie county, about one hundred miles from Jamestown. Here my family continued and grew up to manhood; I, myself, being the first to set my face to the far west. He was a man of great perseverance and industry, a house joiner and painter by profession. In the vicinity he located large tracts of land, built frame dwellings on them, and sold, reserving his best river lands for his children, and built comfortable houses on them. In one of these dwellings I was born. Of his industry, many anecdotes were told, such as disturbing the neighbors by the sound of saw and hammer at night, and call of stock before day. He was the first to introduce ditching against troublesome neighbors. He was also a great stock raiser. At the time of the passage of Cornwallis to Yorktown he suffered by his depredations.

He reared a family of six children, three sons and three daughters—David, George and Robert; Nancy, Molly and Betty. Betty married a man by the name of Overby, and she left but one son by the name of Thomas Overby, who removed to the State of Georgia about the year 1820. David Wilson, the oldest son, went into Revolutionary service, and never returned, or was heard from. George, the second son, lived to be old before he married, and then married an old widow, leaving no children. He was the last survivor of his family, from whom I received my information in making up this narrative. He was a man of great piety and godliness; a constant reader of the Bible, attendant at public worship with any denomination, without party spirit or prejudice, although a member of the Baptist Church. In moral

honesty he was the standard of his neighborhood; and as my father died when I was only ten years old, of whom I could know but little, I will relate a few anecdotes of him.

Whatever he had for sale, he put a price on it, and that price he would have, and should he be offered *more*, he would not accept it; and this occurred so often in his sales of property, in the neighborhood that it became a proverb.

At the end of every year he was scrupulous and punctual to pay every cent. He never went to the Courthouse but on the day of election to cast his vote, which he never failed to do. Being asked why he was so punctual on elections, replied: "My country has made it my duty, not privilege, to vote."

One more, and it may be of service to you to know it. In the year 1819, your uncle, Legrande, removed to Huntsville, Ala., in the midst of the great immigration of that day, and was seeking business, as you may be some of these days, without recommendatory letters. The gentleman to whom he applied inquired where he was from, deferring an answer for a few days; in the meantime he met a man in whom he could confide, from Dinwiddie county, Va., and asked him if he knew this young man Wilson. "No," he answered, "I do not know the young *man*, but I know the *family* well, and they are proverbial for honesty." Upon which he employed your uncle in his responsible business. This anecdote throws some value upon your desire to know something of your pregenitors, notwithstanding the great power of Democratic institutions to level society to the standard of individual merit. Yet all are looking to the *channel* through which they come for character.

But this must suffice for the present. I hope you will



succeed in your present undertaking, to store up profitable knowledge for yourself and society, and may God add His blessing to your labors and sanctify them to His own glory. Your father,

JAMES WILSON.

LETTER 2.

WALL HILL, MISS., April 14th, 1857.

My dear Son:

I resume my narrative of Uncle George's peculiar trait of character, because it had effect on our family in its embarrassment. At the time of his wife's death, her heirs had removed to west Tennessee. They removed her negro property to the west, and rather than separate the family, which would be done if he brought *his* back to Virginia, he liberated *his*, and remained without servants to the day of his death. When I come to the history of my family after my father's death, you will see the bearing of that benevolent disposition.

My father, Robert Wilson, the youngest son of Stephen Wilson, grew up to manhood (with the ordinary education of the day), prepared to dig mother earth for a living, and in the occupation of tobacco planting, provided well for his family. He was of industrious habits and perseverance in business, of warm, social disposition, a zealous supporter of the Church of the Baptist Order, and to the day of his death, a leader in the cause of common schools in his vicinity. In early life, he married Clara Fisher, the oldest daughter of James Fisher, of Brunswick county, Va. She also was of like habits, a zealous professor of religion of the same order; a great

reader, and lover of vocal and instrumental music. She entered the Church in her fifteenth year, and with unwavering faith ran the Christian race, with a truly Catholic spirit, advocating and aiding in all the benevolent efforts of her day, seemingly insensible to party divisions in the Church of Christ, as her liberality did testify.

His marriage took place about the year 1780. With a firm determination to provide for his own, and the wants of his house, he began life by overlooking the farm of his relation, Maj. Ned Ragsdale, of Lunenburg county, who at that day represented that county in the Virginia Legislature. While engaged in his employ, in the full enjoyment of domestic happiness, with his first born son and bosom companion, the conflagration of his dwelling occurred by which every article of furniture and clothing were destroyed. The great difficulties of that day surrounding the commencement of life, cannot be comprehended or appreciated at this day.

Consider the trouble preceding the Declaration of Independence, all the harassing measures of the mother country, the curtailment of trade, the few improvements in labor-saving machinery, if you can, and you may have some faint conception of the spinning wheel and loom in the house for female labor; the plow, hoe and ax for the field labor of men, all of the roughest construction. They reaped the field with the reaphook, plowed with a wooden shaft plow, and share of an uncouth, crooked piece of iron; for instance, a grubhoe turned upside down, and fastened on a handle, and inserted into the stock of the plow. Flax, cotton and wool, the only articles from which to manufacture clothing for both sexes, and these to pass through the fingers on the roughest machinery that the ingenuity of the age could invent; for instance, pick the seed out of the cotton with the fingers, or on

hand-roller gins, pick and clean wool with the fingers, for the "lap card"; break, hurd, and swingle and hackle the flax, and spin it on the lap-flax wheel.

The field and road carriage for transportation, the single, or two horse cart. The tobacco packed into hogsheads, weighing 1,200 to 1,500 pounds, and rolled on the ground to market. Under circumstances like these did my parents come before the parson for matrimony, clothed in habiliments of their own manufacture, for I have heard my mother say she spun and wove her wedding dress, on the 1000. sley, the finest manufacture of that day. Many nights, during the Revolutionary struggle, did my mother with others pass in the deep woods, to avoid British aggression. Should we not be surprised that any of that generation should be able to read and write. This disastrous conflagration did not depress my parents, but they plied their energies to business, and by prudent economy, provided a competence for themselves and family, always the constant attendants on public worship.

How long my father continued in the employ of Maj. Ragsdale, I know not, but he laid up in that county a tract of land of 400 acres. From this county he removed to Dinwiddie county, to the land of his father, where he continued till his death in the year 1804. At which place his family of children grew to manhood, and his widow died, and are both buried in the same family cemetery. By this marriage he raised eight children to be grown—Fisher, Thomas, Baxster, Ragsdale, James, David, Elizabeth Ragsdale, Legrand Whitehall, and Benjamin.

Nanny, my father's sister, was dependent on him for a home after her father's death, with her negroes, numbering twenty. These, she devised by will to my father, and were to be liberated at some convenient time after

his death. They were all young, and in possession of my father at his death.

After his death, Uncle George instituted suit for their liberation, which was sustained by the Court, and the negroes freed. These young negroes had been raised and provided for by my father for several years, and were worthless as hands, and only an expense, and you can readily see, a great burden to his family.

But four of Robert Wilson's sons left issue to bear the name, viz., Fisher, James, David, and Legrand.

Thomas Wilson left two daughters, only, Elizabeth R., married a man by the name of Snow, and died, leaving an only daughter, to the care of Legrand W. Wilson, named Vermonta Elizabeth.

In my next I will commence the history of my own family.

Your father,

JAMES WILSON.

## CHAPTER III.

## LETTER 3.

WALL HILL, MISS., May 1st, 1857.

My dear Son Nicholas:

I come now to the history of myself and family, but as my companion was the daughter of Dr. Nicholas Joseph Bourdon, I must defer to enter on it, till I relate all the information I possess in regard to her parentage.

Dr. Nicholas Joseph Bourdon, your mother's father, of St. Omar, of the Province of Artois in France, was born about the year 1750. He studied medicine and surgery in Paris; came to America during the Revolutionary War as Surgeon in the French Navy. When the French troops returned to France he thought proper to remain in America. Came up to Petersburg and lived among the French residents for sometime, then came up and commenced the practice of his profession in Dinwiddie county, adjoining the county of Nottoway, and continued in this locality until 1778, when, on the 18th of October, he married Martha Dennis, the daughter of Richard and Martha Dennis, of Nottoway county. He then purchased a tract of land on Nottoway River in Dinwiddie county and settled, and remained on it till his death, which took place in January, 1813, at the age of sixty-three.

By his first marriage, only one lived to adult age, your mother, Elizabeth Joseph. By a subsequent marriage to a cousin of his first wife, Miss Jane Dennis, three were born who lived to be heads of families, viz., Henry, Adrian, and Catherine Matilda.

In social intercourse, Dr. Bourdon was polite, kind and interesting, a great favorite with the young, for his wit and sprightliness; a Frenchman in pomatum powder and dress, of low stature, and great bodily health, a great admirer of Mr. Jefferson in politics, and of the Baptists as religionists and church government. He held the confidence of his acquaintances at home, as a professional man, and received the same from the Faculty abroad. I have an honorary certificate of membership, sent him by the Medical and Surgical Society of Philadelphia in 1806, by its president, Benjamin Rush, who is styled in history, "The father of American Medicine." It is said he expatriated himself, on account of some difficulty between himself and his brother (who was a Catholic Priest), on the subject of religion. He was a successful planter, and a most indefatigable business man, in every department of life in which he was called to act, and particularly successful and celebrated in surgery. I believe I have said all that is of any interest to you or me, on our connection with ancestors. I shall in my next begin the history and progress of my own family.

Affectionately, your father,

JAMES WILSON.

Addenda: The reader will forbear while I append to the above a brief sketch of my grandfather's early days, as given by my mother.

In the year of our Lord, 1780, or '82, there resided in the City of Paris, France, a young man, engaged in the practice of his profession, medicine and surgery. He was a graduate of the "Academy of Paris," and in some way connected with the Medical Department of

that institution, or its hospitals. I judge by three small volumes, written in French, which I have, and which I have had translated, that he was a Quiz Master in the Academy, an office that paid handsomely a hundred years later, when I was at college, and is an office in medical colleges to-day. This young surgeon and physician, was a Huguenot, a Protestant of decided character. He had an elder brother, who was a bigoted Catholic priest, and filled with all the wickedness and hatred of the priesthood of that day towards the Protestants; he often twitted his younger brother about his Protestantism, and it is natural to suppose that the love and affection existing between brothers began to grow cold, and would sooner or later culminate in a rupture. The priest grew more arrogant and oppressive, and one day on entering the doctor's apartments, told him flatly that the time had arrived when he *must* give up his Protestantism and come into the holy "Mother Church." The doctor reasoned the matter with him, but to no purpose. The priest grew worse and worse, when, finally, the doctor, losing all self-control, felled his brother to the floor. "The die was cast." The priest regaining his feet left the room hissing, "I will *burn* you for this!" The doctor knew that even then, in Paris and in all France, the priesthood had the power to carry out this diabolical threat, and that it would be done, so he hastily prepared to leave his native land, and that night, mounting his horse, he rode out of Paris, and made his way to the coast. Providence favoring him, when he reached the coast (Calais, if I remember correctly), he found the fleet of Count De'Grasse making ready to sail for America to aid a people struggling for liberty. On board of this fleet he came to our country, reaching the Chesapeake Bay in time to act a part in the fall of Yorktown, and capture of Lord Cornwallis.



This is the history of my grandfather, Dr. Nicholas Joseph Bourdon, as given me by my mother when a child at her knee. She loved to talk to me of her father, and childlike, I loved to hear her talk of my grandfather, and the facts were indelibly impressed upon my young mind. An interesting question arises here in this history, which is this: At what point Presbyterianism developes in the family, or, from whence its source? My mother's history gives the source—this Huguenot. All of the name in Virginia *to-day*, are Presbyterians. In 1863-4, when visiting my uncle, Adrian Bourdon in Petersburg, Va., I found they were all Presbyterians.

#### LETTER 4.

WALL HILL, MISS., August 27th, 1863.

My dear Son, Nicholas:

I resume again my long neglected narrative of my family, for the special benefit of my children, and yourself in particular. Ignorance of family genealogy is a prevalent sin in most families of my acquaintance, and I am anxious it shall not continue longer in mine, therefore, my labor to impart to you, and through you to the rest of my children that information which may do you all some good if improved.

I, James Wilson, am the fourth son of Robert and Clara Wilson, born on the 6th day of April, 1791, in Dinwiddie county, Va. Nurtured by kind, affectionate parents, I grew to boyhood in the common occupation and employment of country children, surrounded by slaves and slavery, accustomed to all the duties and business suitable for children, such as going on errands on



horseback, and on foot, using the hoe, ax, and plow. At ten years, I was put to school to a young, ignorant teacher in my A B C's. Although young, I was resolved to suffer no scholar to excel me, and it so happened that a neighbor girl, about my age and progress, entered into a contest for the mastery by a race to three syllables; the one excelling to rank above the other. I beat the race, and accordingly ranked ahead of her. This little contest engendered a strife and bickering spirit in her family, which lasted to mature manhood. She was a girl of bright mind, and made fine progress in knowledge, and filled high station in life. She was an intimate associate and friend of my wife, and tried hard to poison her mind against me, as she stated it to me many years after our marriage.

At the age of twelve years, a great religious excitement sprung up in the neighborhood, and I became much interested in it. The fear of God in His power to cast all sinners into hell, filled me with great alarm. I prayed to God, and sought to propitiate his favor by living a holy life. I felt that I was a great sinner, and that the face of God was against me, and that I must perish unless He would save. This uneasy and miserable state of mind continued for some months, and I continued my prayers, waiting for some wonderful relief, not comprehending the plan of salvation, through Christ Jesus till the excitement subsided, and my mind became occupied with my regular course of studies in school; then my religious impressions died out, and prayer was restrained. Sometime before these religious impressions were made on my mind, I went with a younger brother into the orchard, just about sunset, and beheld that splendid scene. In the morning I was at the same place and beheld his august rising from beneath the horizon. With amaze-

ment and wonder I stood in contemplation of the amazing phenomenon! How had the sun, which the evening before, had disappeared in the Western sky, arisen in the East? The novelty and magnitude of the phenomenon was mysterious and incomprehensible to my young and ignorant mind. This, I am sensible was the first exercise of *reason*. From that day to this, I am sensible of mental progress. From that day to this I have sought knowledge, and tried to treasure up wisdom, and the Lord has blessed me with pretty good understanding. For three years in succession I was with one teacher, in one place, Wilson's meeting house, or "Old Cutbánk," of Nottoway county; a man of some celebrity for intelligence, but of no moral character, a drunkard, gambler, and notorious infidel. While with him, in the pursuit of knowledge, I imbibed his infidel distrust of God's revealed word, and became a scoffer at religion. The pious example and Christian conversation of my mother, together with the religious convictions already mentioned, restrained all excess in morality. I still continued a pretty good show of morals, externally, particularly, a lover of "truth." I will mention one incident in this part of my narrative, to illustrate: I was in a course of reading from Paine's writing, when my mother made request that I would not read his "Age of Reason." I promised her I would not, and although this book was in my hand and on my table for sometime, I did not read one period of it. I kept my promise to my mother inviolate, although, about this time I read several volumes of both English and French infidelity. After having expended as much time and means of the patrimonial provision, as fell to my share, I stepped out upon the stage of human effort, to provide for my individual wants and establish individual character both for time and eternity. This

was a most trying time for me, a most unpresuming and unassuming young man of seventeen years. My love for learning induced me to engage in the profession of teaching. I obtained a small school, and set about reviewing the ground I had passed over, while under pupilage, and found my stock of information but small and very imperfect. This induced a course of rigid selfdenial and effort to prepare myself for honorable and useful intercourse among men. I neglected no opportunity or means in my power in the economy of time or money to advance my stock of knowledge, to feel independent and self-reliant, and establish honorable character for life. I found myself in the midst of the most wicked, drunken, gambling, and debauched society I have ever witnessed to this day. Having been raised up in pious seclusion at school, out of reach of the world around me, I stood amazed at the scene before me! I resolved never to mingle with or partake of the seductions before me. I became a total abstinence man; I set a watch over my tongue "to swear not all," and to avoid all personal intercourse with any but the intelligent and virtuous. This resolution threw me out of the great world into a very contracted circle of associates, and afforded means and opportunity to prosecute my favorite pursuits. The libraries of the intelligent and the boards of the virtuous, with all their salutary influences were open to me; and I enjoyed the respect and confidence of all. My education consisted of reading, writing, grammar, geography, use of the Terrestrial Globe, arithmetic, geometry, embracing practical surveying, distances and leveling, and one year's study of Latin. I engaged in teaching a secluded school in Greenville county. I made the acquaintance, and secured the friendship of Mr. John Fisher, a son of Daniel Fisher, member of the Virginia Convention to ratify the

Federal Constitution, a gentleman of classical education. He encouraged me to study French, and by his assistance, I made considerable progress in that language. His two sons, about my age, who were studying under their father, assisted me much, and comforted me in my self-denying and study. I can say, truthfully, that this family in its influence did more to make a man of me, than any I ever met with, and to my latest breath, I recur to the many pleasant hours of enjoyment in this polite and intelligent society of friends. I continued to study and teach in Mr. Fisher's neighborhood for two years, 1810 and '11, having my home in the family of Col. Edmund Lucas. In the summer of 1811, the great Eclipse of the sun occurred which alarmed the ladies of the neighborhood very much. In the fall of the year, the great Comet appeared in the Northwest, and continued to approach the sun, in a southerly direction, enlarging in brilliancy and length of tail until April, when it passed around the sun and disappeared, when we experienced a fall of snow to the depth of four inches on the 15th of April, and yet, we had a full crop of fruit. At the close of this year, I received invitation and better pay from Maj. William Parham, of Sussex county, which I accepted, and removed to his home in 1812, while he was sitting in the State Legislature. Just at my arrival his wife received intelligence of the conflagration of the Richmond Theater where great numbers perished with many members of the Legislature. His family was relieved of their anxiety in due course of mail, and made to rejoice in his safety. On the 18th of June of this year the Madison Declaration of war with Great Britain was issued. For the past three or four years the country had suffered every privation from the passage of Embargo and Non-Intercourse Laws. Now the military

force of the country is called into action, and with it money begins again to circulate, and the people find relief again in money matters. A market is opened for produce for army supply, and all kinds of labor becomes remunerative. And money again passes among the people. This public excitement interrupted my course of study, and I began the study of politics. Constitutional law, and finance first engaged my attention, and a good time to learn it practically. After four years' absence from the old homestead, the place of my nativity, among strangers, I return to my brother's house, and to revive my acquaintance with those of my boyhood. None stood fairer or engaged my attention so much as she who was nurtured on the same lap, and who was now in the bloom of womanhood, Miss Elizabeth Joseph Bourdon. After some four months, I obtained her consent to accompany me on the journey of life. The death of her father, suddenly, from apoplexy, caused a postponement of our nuptials. This year (1813) I was engaged in teaching at the same house where I received my early education, and in the making preliminary arrangements for our marriage. This was a year of joyful anticipation and anxious apprehensions. The drafting of the militia, marching of soldiers, rumors of battles on our northern border. Calls for the whole military force to guard Petersburg, Richmond and Norfolk, kept every one in a fever of excitement. In a call of this kind I made a tour of eighteen days, and served as quartermaster of the regiment *protem*. When we returned home, I was appointed sergeant-major by Col. Winfield Scott, its commander *protem*, and continued in that position until the regiment was disbanded. This was the only military service I was ever called upon to perform. On the first of January, 1814, I returned to my school at old "Cutbank," for the year. On the

25th of May, 1814, I was united in marriage to your mother, Elizabeth Joseph Bourdon, whom I took home to my mother's house, and continued my school to the end of the year. 1815 I resume my school, and begin housekeeping. Now new engagements, new wants, new excitements and new duties arise and call me into action and faithfulness to my bosom companion in supplying her wants and comforting her *heart*.

Here ends the valuable narrative of my father. The only history of the family, the only history of his own efforts in early life to fit himself for usefulness, ever written. I am truly thankful they have been preserved throughout all the years and I can now put them in a form to be read by his descendants for all the years to come. I have now only the family record, written by himself, to guide me in continuing the history. I have heard my father and mother revert to their youth, and describe fox hunting, fishing frolics, social parties, and the celebrated Virginia Reel, and I suppose that their young lives were very much like the young peoples' lives of to-day, strewn with sunshine and flowers.

Consulting my Bible record, I find that on the 28th day of January, 1815, a man child was born in the new home, and given the name of its grandfather, Nicholas Joseph. The advent of the first born is always an epoch in the lives of young couples, filled with joy and gladness. It was so in the Garden of Eden, and has been so ever since. Mother Eve cried out with gladness, "I have gotten me a man from God," and every Christian has felt that thrill of joy, and has breathed a more earnest prayer of thankfulness to God than ever before in their lives. I know my parents were not an exception, but their joy was of short duration, for I find in the record that Nicholas Joseph Wilson died February 28, 1815,



age one month; sad event! Strange providence, and I know that it brought sorrow immeasurable to the young hearts starting out on the pathway of life. Here was life in miniature, joy to-day, sorrow to-morrow! a sad, bitter lesson to learn so soon. How shall we comfort the young mother? I don't know, I have never learned how! I heard many attempt it. I have often tried myself, but human comfort is a failure at such a time, and nothing but the religion of Jesus can comfort in the presence of death.

After the burial of little Joseph the world did not look so bright, the old homestead seemed to have lost its charms, and a desire to find a new home, and new surroundings, sprang up in the hearts of the young couple; and they began to talk together of the "Great West," and for a while, they were even afraid to speak of it in the household. But the desire to move had taken hold of them, and they soon began to discuss the difficulties and to make the necessary preparations. At that early day, it was a terrible undertaking to move from Eastern Virginia to North Alabama. The roads were bad; a large portion of the country to be traversed was thinly settled and mountainous, and there were dangers by the wayside to be encountered. It is hard for us to-day to realize that there were no steamboats plying up and down the rivers, and few ferry boats, or even bridges across the rivers. The difficulties and dangers of that long trip to the West would appal us to-day, but our fore fathers, I believe, were made of sterner material than their descendants. While the preparations for the journey were going on, another interesting event occurred, and my record tells, that on the 6th of February, 1816, George Adrian Wilson was born, named after, or for my father's oldest brother, George Wilson, and my

mother's youngest brother, Adrian Bourdon. About the middle of September, 1816, the emigrants started towards the setting sun, mother, child and nurse in a carriage, then a wagon with furniture, bedding, tent and provisions; then three other wagons with the luggage of the negroes, and all necessary tools, with a small drove of milch cows and calves.

On a certain day, neighbors, kindred and friends met to bid the emigrants Godspeed, and farewell. It was, indeed, a trying ordeal, and I have seen the tears roll down my mother's cheeks when she would attempt to describe that parting scene and the hardships of that long trip.

Twenty-five years later, the younger brother and sister, Uncle Le Grand and Aunt Matilda Wilson moved West their family, and they were united again; the others never met. Some went a day's journey with the emigrants before bidding that last farewell. When they reached the Western confines of the State, and had struggled to the summits of the mountains, all stop, and looking back take a last view of the "Old Dominion." Farewell, Virginia!

The descent of the mountain was difficult and dangerous. The road had degenerated into a mere Indian trail, and in places so steep as to compel them to chain a log behind the wagons, and drag it down the mountains. The "lock chain" would not hold the wagon off the horses. Finally, they reached Knoxville, Tenn., where they halted for a week to rest, wash up, and have the horses all shod again. From this place on, they had better, smoother roads, and an easier time, and reached Huntsville, Madison county, Ala., in November, having been on the road nearly two months. My father bought land nine miles west of Huntsville and went to work



building, to shelter the family and stock from the blasts of winter, which was rapidly coming, and succeeded in getting up very comfortable quarters before the severity of winter. It required several years to erect the necessary buildings to make the family comfortable, and when we remember that sawmills were rare in those days, especially in this new country (steam was not in general use, and waterpower scarce), we wonder how they ever succeeded in building houses and making them habitable. Our forefathers carried their sawmills with them, and sawed their own lumber for building purposes. The old "whipsaw," as it was called, has passed out of existence, and has been forgotten, as old friends often are. I doubt if one could be found to-day, simply because they are not needed, are not in demand. This primitive sawmill was propelled by human power. It required two stout men to run the saw, and it was hard work. Now it required about five good hands with axes, crosscut saw and broadaxe to go into the forest to furnish stocks or saw logs for this wonderful "sawmill" to convert into plank, and when I tell you that about 250 feet of plank is about as much as two stout hands could saw from "early morn to dewey eve," you can readily see why it has been thrown away and forgotten. It served its day, and we give it all due honor. I shall revert to this wonderful sawmill again later on.

In his home in Madison county, Ala., the family lived twenty years, and here all the children were born and grew up, except the youngest, who is writing this history. I suppose this was the most beautiful and best loved home, the family ever had. It required hard labor to make it, as well as years of precious time. The houses were built of logs, negro quarters, barn and all. The great house, "Old Massus' house," (called "greatust" by

the negroes), was built of hewn logs, neatly daubed and pointed, and was a very handsome house, and the most comfortable that can be built, cool in the summer and warm in the winter. These old-fashioned log houses are to be seen at this late day, and it is remarkable how long they have lasted, and how long they *will* last when properly attended to. I love the old log house, for in it I was born, and in it I lived all my early life until manhood, and in solid comfort and convenience. I fear not to compare it to the delicate, fashionable cottages of to-day.

## CHAPTER IV.

To my father and mother were born eight children, who lived to become heads of large and promising families; two died in infancy, and one was stricken down with pernicious malarial fever in his 12th year, James Le Grand. The brief record in my Bible, written by his father's hand, tells me this of my brother, for whom I was named: "He died, giving bright evidence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." This is enough! Can more be said of anyone?

This is the boy's history! I hope the same may be said of every one who reads his history. I trust as much may be said of him who bears his name.

## CHAPTER V.

George Adrian Wilson was born in Virginia, as stated, and was brought in his mother's arms to Alabama, where he grew up to young manhood in the old Alabama home. His early education was under the supervision of his father, who taught school many years in the early history of the family. He read medicine under Dr. Bonner, of Tennessee, and attended medical lectures in Transylvania University, Ky., and commenced the practice of medicine when about twenty-four years of age. He soon established an enviable reputation as a physician, and was greatly beloved as a physician and a Christian gentleman. To know him was to love him; and if he ever had an enemy in or out of the profession, I never heard of it; gentle, kind, compassionate, he was always ready to go to the relief of suffering humanity. Physically, he was a delicate, feeble man, and in the latter years of his life, suffered much from indigestion, and all of its attendant ills, aches and pains. He was ordained an elder in the Presbyterian Church Chulahoma, Miss., early in life, and made an excellent and useful officer in the church during life. He was married to Miss Mary Monroe Hardin, of Marshall county, Miss., an educated, Christian lady. The fruits of this marriage were five children, three of whom became heads of families. George, a young man of uncommon promise, died while attending the University of Mississippi, from an injury received while exercising in the gymnasium. The writer was with him the last days of his life, and can testify to his bright profession of religion and his triumphant Christian death. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

George was a remarkably handsome young man of

fine mind, and was making fine progress in all of his studies, and stood well in his classes. His father never recovered from the shock of this sudden and untimely death. He bore it with remarkable Christian fortitude, and submitted to his Father's rod; like David, he was dumb, he opened not his mouth, because "Thou didst it." But the shock had its effect upon his frail constitution, and his delicate, nervous system began to fail, and in a few years, the Christian physician, the consecrated elder, in the house of God, the poor man's friend, the indulgent, faithful father, was called from labor to refreshment.

Mary Eliza, the first born of Dr. G. A. and Mary Wilson, developed into a handsome, domestic young woman, and was a great comfort to her father, after the death of his faithful wife. She was the housekeeper for several years, managed and cared for the younger children with a mother's tenderness and faithfulness. I never saw another daughter fill a mother's place in the family so completely, faithfully and cheerfully. She was a model young woman, a devout Christian. She was married to William T. Richmond, of Marshall county, Miss. Three children were born to them—Joseph Monroe, Mary Hardin and Sallie Elizabeth. In a short while after the mother dies; the father marries again and moves to Texas, where these children have grown up to manhood and womanhood.

Monroe is a promising young surgeon and physician, a graduate of Medical Department of Tulane University of New Orleans, and is practicing his profession in the "Lone Star State," at El Paso.

Mary Hardin, the older daughter, married a Mr. Fris-toe, of Edna, Texas, where she now lives, and is raising up an interesting family about her; but Sallie Elizabeth

has never married, but is one of the loveliest characters, the sweetest disposition, a perfect counterpart, I am told, of her sainted mother. Her history has been remarkably successful as a music and literary teacher. She started out from home at Edna, Texas, as a teacher when but eighteen years old, and has taught in Austin, El Paso and other points in the State, and has accumulated a neat little competency in real estate in El Paso, where she now is teaching music, and making herself useful in Sabbath-school teaching.

The second son of Dr. George A. Wilson, Joseph James, was a remarkable child from his birth. He had an unusually large and singularly shaped head, that attracted attention in his childhood, and even in after years, and as he grew older, it was discovered that in his disposition he was markedly different from children of his age, while they were amusing themselves in their childish sports, the grave, quiet Joe would be listening attentively to a conversation between older persons, and he soon received the *sobriquet*, "The old man," and now and then some one would prophesy that he was the coming preacher of the family. These singular precocious traits really indicated the coming man, and the boy grew into the sober, calculating, hardworking student, eager to fill his mind with useful knowledge, and at the age of twenty he had obtained a pretty thorough English and classical education. He chose medicine instead of the pulpit, and under his father's guidance and instruction was soon ready for college, and in due time graduated in medicine and surgery.

Dr. J. J. Wilson has diplomas from two of the first-class medical colleges of this country. He is local surgeon for one of the great railroad systems, "The Illinois Central," and in his county and State stands in the front rank of his profession.

At the age of thirty-four he was married to Miss Lucy Yancey, daughter of Thomas Yancey, of Senatobia, Miss., a Christian lady of rare beauty, culture and refinement. The family now consists of four promising, handsome children—George LeRoy, Joseph James, Rosa May, and Thomas Webber. George and Joseph are at college preparing for usefulness, and bid fair to take a high position in the professions they have chosen. George is fitting himself for usefulness in "Dental Surgery," and Joe to take his father's place in the practice of medicine and surgery, at Tulane Medical College. This is a model Christian family, and one of the happiest I have ever known. Rosa May, the darling of the household, a beautiful, promising girl, is in college preparing for usefulness. All are members of the church; the father a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church.

Thomas Benjamin, the youngest of Dr. George A. Wilson's family, was born in Marshall county, Miss., and received a thorough academic education in the high school at Coldwater, Tate county, Miss. He chose pharmacy for his profession, and is, and has been in the drug business all his life. When quite young he was married to Miss Maggie Cameron, the daughter of a distinguished Methodist divine, who for several years was stationed in the northern portion of the State. Miss Maggie was an educated, beautiful and attractive woman, a good wife, and mother. The young couple have four children, two boys and two girls, which I hope they are training for usefulness and heaven. They live in the city of Corinth, Miss.



## CHAPTER VI.

Elizabeth James, eldest daughter of James and Elizabeth Joseph Wilson, was born January 26, 1818, in Madison county, Ala. She grew up with the family, and received a good English education, and at the early age of fifteen was married to Isham R. Howze. I wish my record threw some light upon this early marriage, but it does not, and I suppose when she grew older and became a "woman grown," she entered upon her life work as teacher, which she followed till the infirmities of age forced her to give it up. She possessed the rare faculty of managing girls and young ladies, and her school-room was always full.

This was the first school I attended, and I remember it well. It was *strictly* a female school, but I was only nine years old, and had to accompany my oldest sister from home every morning on horseback.

My sister had six or eight boarders, young ladies who lived at a distance. All but two went home every Friday evening, and returned Monday morning. A German music teacher also was a boarder. I think thirty was the capacity of the school, and it was always full. How she managed those girls, taught that school, and kept up her boarding department, and attended to her own children, for she had five, and the oldest was eleven, I never knew. Of course, she had servants, a cook, dining-room maid, and nurse for the baby, but that will not solve the problem, and when I think there were no sewing machines, how did she keep her family clad? And the problem none of her numerous progeny can solve to-day. Her husband, a delicate man, often assisted in the school-room, and was always busy.



This is one of the largest branches of the Wilson family tree. Seven children were born and lived to adult age, and six large families are growing up from them.

George Adrian, the first born, was married to Miss Mollie White, of Murfreesboro, Tenn., in December, 1859, and the happy couple commenced housekeeping in Memphis, Tenn., in 1860, and but one year of unalloyed happiness was allowed them. The Civil War came on that made so many widows and orphans, and the young husband, now a father, felt it his duty to go to the defense of his country. He enlisted in the 42d Mississippi Regiment, which reached Richmond in June, 1862, followed his regiment for one year as First Lieutenant Co. D. On the fatal field of Gettysburg, first day of July, 1863, he laid down his life for his country, "*Dulce est pro patria mori*"!

His faithful servant, Stephen, sought for and carried his body off the battlefield, and back to the hospital, and prepared it for burial. There we put him in a rude coffin that Stephen had managed to make. Many spoke of the singular sweet smile that lingered still on the dead soldier's countenance. After the War, "The Southern Memorial Association," removed his body, with all the other dead that could be found, to Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Va., and a neat headstone marks his resting place; and it is some consolation to know that he sleeps in the soil he died to defend.

Arthur, Adrian's son, grew to be a bright youth, accepted an appointment to the United States Naval Academy, at Annapolis, Md., where he graduated with distinction, but soon succumbed to typhoid fever. His widow and daughter reside in Winona, Miss.

Several years after the close of the Civil War, Adrian Howze's widow married Judge Williamson, of

Carroll county, Miss., and they reside in Greenwood, Miss.

William Duke, second son of Isham R. and Elizabeth James Howze, was raised and educated in the village of Chulahoma, Marshall county, Miss., and just arrived at manhood in time to enlist in the Confederate Army in 1861. He enlisted in the First Mississippi Regiment, and was elected Second Lieutenant in Company F. The regiment was drilled and prepared for service at Iuka, Miss., and with the Third Mississippi Regiment, forming the Brigade of General James L. Alcorn, ordered to Bowling Green, Ky., to join the Army of Albert Sydney Johnson. His command wintered at Hopkinsville, Ky., and in February, 1862, was ordered to Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River. Here on the battlefield he won his laurels as a Confederate soldier, but was surrendered to the enemy, and languished in prison for months on Johnson Island. In May or June, 1863, his regiment was discharged and sent home, but just in time to take part in the gallant defense of Port Hudson on the Mississippi River, where, on the 9th of July, 1863, he was again turned over to the tender mercies of the foe as a prisoner of war. His military experience was sad and trying in the extreme.

After the close of the War, this gallant Confederate soldier returned to his old vocation, the school-room. In a few years he was happily married to Miss Lizzie Newsum, of Desoto county, Miss., and settled in the county site, Hernando, where his useful life was spent; the last two or three years in the ministry of the Baptist Church. Father and mother have both gone to their reward, but a large family of children were reared. Some have married. One family is in Colorado, another in California, the others in Mississippi.

James Wilson Howze, the third son, grew up a strong, athletic boy, and at the age of sixteen, enlisted in the Nineteenth Mississippi Regiment, for the War, and served in the army of Lee. Capt. Thomas J. Hardin, doubly connected with the family by marriage, was captain of James' company, and reported that the boy made a most excellent soldier. Captain Hardin rose to be colonel of the Nineteenth Mississippi Regiment, and fell at the bloody angle at Spotsylvania. Jimmie followed his captain through all the fierce battles in which the "Nineteenth Mississippi" was engaged until June, 1862. In one of the bloody encounters with McClellan's host in the Chickahominy Swamp, he was mortally wounded, and died on the battlefield before he could be removed to the hospital. A comrade who was with him in his last hours, bore messages of love, and assurances of salvation to his mother at home.

Oh, how precious were these messages from the battlefield to the loved ones, the waiting ones at home! "Tell mother, I am not afraid to die. Tell her, I have lived as she taught me, and I die happy."

This is the first blood of the family, shed in the fierce struggle for constitutional freedom. How much more shall be required? We shall see as we progress in the history of this family. Those were the days that tried the faith of our fathers and mothers at home, while we were all away!

Susan Bennett, eldest daughter of Isham R. and Elizabeth J. Howze, was the pet of the family, which was very natural, as she was the first girl born in the house.

As she developed into womanhood she was a general favorite with every one. In childhood she showed a remarkable talent for music, and was given every advantage in this line, and soon became the musician of the family,

which was rather noted in this respect. She was certainly the finest performer on the piano I ever met. During the winter of 1864 and '65, the Second Missouri Cavalry Regiment was stationed in North Mississippi, and was a great protection to the people against the pillaging raids of the Federals, who would dash out of Memphis, and strip the people of everything they could find of value. In this regiment was a dashing young trooper, by the name of Kuhl, a German, and of course, a natural musician, and very fond of music. In the discharge of his duty on this out post, riding through the country in quest of the enemy, the young people met. Mr. Kuhl was educated, refined and polished; he was a soldier, a defender of the South. It was very natural that kindly feelings should soon spring up between these young people of congenial natures.

After the close of the great unpleasantness, Mr. Kuhl commenced merchandizing in the village of Wall Hill, near Mrs. Howze's residence, and in a few years built up a fine, lucrative business. The young people were married, and commenced housekeeping under the most auspicious circumstances, and fortune smiled upon the business of the father. Soon a family sprang up around the young people, and three lovely and lovable children were added to the household—Burchard, Edward and Susie.

We are hard to satisfy in this world, and contentment ("which is great gain") is a treasure and virtue few of us possess.

In a few years Mr. Kuhl sells out his prosperous business, lovely home, etc., in the village of Wall Hill, and moved with his family to Florida. He reached the State about the time the orange craze swept over it, and located in the city of Orlando, Orange county, and commenced

merchandizing again, and engaged also in orange culture, and buying up suitable lands for oranges, and other semi-tropical fruits.

Fortune again smiled on him, and he accumulated wealth rapidly for several years, but a change comes; the enervating, debilitating effect of the semi-tropical climate begins to have its effect upon his constitution, not naturally strong and robust, and health begins to fail, and fail rapidly, and soon the end comes. "Misfortunes," we are told, "comes not singly," and soon that blasting frost that played such havoc with the orange groves of the State, swept over the "Land of Flowers," leaving desolation in its wake. Many were ruined. All were damaged greatly.

The sons, business men of ability, went to work with a will to save a portion of the shattered estate, and succeeded, and the family, now, are residing in the city of Texarkana, Ark. The brothers are in the banking business, and prospering. I am afraid, as a family, they paid little attention to that great injunction of the Saviour, "Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness."

Burchard and Edward have married, and young families are springing up, and the flock is continually increasing.

The fourth son of Isham R. and Elizabeth James Howze, Henry Le Grand, has a history both interesting and distressing. He was too young to enter the army when his brothers enlisted so he remained at home, to work and help to support mother and the younger children, but the boy's heart was filled with patriotism, and a burning desire to be a soldier, which was characteristic of Southern youth.

When the ill-fated First Mississippi Regiment was

exchanged in the spring of 1863 and returned to the State, Henry bids mother good-bye and joined his brothers' company and regiment. The regiment was ordered to the defense of Port Hudson on the Mississippi, as already stated, and Henry soon found himself a prisoner of war. He was paroled by order of General Grant, commanding the department, and the men made their way home through the country on foot, a distance of 200 miles for Henry and the boys from Marshall county. This was a pretty rough initiation for the young soldier, but the worst is to come. On reaching home he found that the squirrels had increased wonderfully and were devastating the corn fields, which were in roasting ear, and just *like* a Southern boy, he rigged up an old shot gun, and declared war on the enemy, and went forth to kill and eat. His frolic was of short duration. A raiding party of Federals from Memphis, prowling through the country, hearing the sound of his gun in the woods, sought and captured the young Nimrod in the "height of his glory."

"Halt, and surrender," astonished the hunter, and a Federal officer and half a dozen men closed round the boy and demanded his gun.

"What are you doing? Don't you see that I am shooting squirrels and having a good time?"

"Where do you live?"

"With my mother on the hill yonder."

"Are you a Confederate soldier?"

The boy hesitated, but thinking of his parole, he answered:

"Yes."

"Well, come along my young man, we will take you in."

"Oh," he said, "I have my parole signed by General



Grant, and I am not to be molested until I am regularly exchanged."

They went up to the homestead. The parole was examined, but in spite of the parole, in spite of an agonizing mother's prayers, they carried that young soldier off to Memphis and put him in the Irving Block Prison.

Earnest efforts were made to have him turned loose, but to no avail. The infamous Provost Marshall said he was found with arms in his hands, and that rendered his paroll null and void. He was sent to Camp Chase where he languished in prison to the close of the war. When he reached home in the spring of 1865, he went to work on his mother's farm, and in a few years brought it into a high state of cultivation, and developed into a first-class Southern farmer. He married Miss Emma Nichols, a most estimable young lady, who has made him a loving, industrious, and faithful wife. This is one of the ideal homes you sometimes read of, but seldom find. Everything seems to be just right. A "family altar" is there, and love and affection seem to be written on the walls of the rooms. The children come round smiling and happy, and you never hear one told to do this or that, they know what is to be done, and do it cheerfully, and there is no friction. This is a large, promising family, and is destined to become one of the most fruitful boughs of the family tree. All are Christians, Bible Christians, and the father an elder in the Presbyterian Church.

Elizabeth Bourdon, second daughter of Isham R. and Elizabeth J. Howze, "Donnie," as she was always called, was a great favorite in the family from childhood, and developed into a lovely character, celebrated for her gentleness, modesty, beautiful hair, and musical talent. After the Civil War she was united in marriage to Captain Thomas J. Eason, a gallant Confederate soldier, an old

schoolmate and neighbor boy, who enlisted in the Seventeenth Mississippi Regiment in 1861, and faithfully followed the Confederate flag until it went down in blood at Appomattox. The young couple settled in Wall Hill, Miss., among their old friends and relatives, where Captain Eason commenced merchandizing, and in a few years established a lucrative business, and soon accumulated a handsome estate. They then removed to Cold Water, Miss., a thriving town on the Illinois Central Railroad for convenience, and to enlarge his growing business, and there merchandized successfully for several years. The family were greatly blessed, and seven children were graciously given them, three lovely girls, and four promising boys. In 1894, the family, for educational purposes, and for health, moved to Fayetteville, Ark., where they have grown up enjoying and utilizing the advantages of the high schools, and State University. The girls are married, and two of them have gone back to the old home in Mississippi. The older sons have passed through the University, and are just starting out in life for themselves. This family also, is destined to become a fruitful bough on the parent stock.

Isham R., the youngest son of Isham R. and Elizabeth James Howze, resides in Denver, Colorado, where he has lived for many years. He has been married twice; has two children by his first wife, who are probably married. He is a lawyer by profession, and when last heard from was Judge of the Criminal Court.

Isham R. Howze, the head of this large and fruitful branch of the parent tree, was in one respect a *strange man*. He was an eminently good man, a conscientious, consecrated Christian. He was a close, constant Bible reader and student, and left to his children a commentary upon several of the books of the New Testament.



But he never allied himself with the Church of God. In theory he was a Baptist, raised by Baptist parents, and thoroughly acquainted with their doctrines and form of government. He was a strong Calvinist, and an admirer of the Presbyterian Church, but he could not accept infant baptism, nor affusion as a Scriptural mode of baptism. He could not be a Baptist, because their democratic form of church government kept them forever quarreling among themselves, and with all other Christians, and these radical views kept him out of the Church of God, through a long and useful life. Yet he died a glorious, triumphant, Christian death. I think his death-bed scene was the brightest and happiest I ever witnessed, and was only equalled by that of his faithful and consecrated wife several years later. This was a strange mistake for a man of uncommon sense and fine judgment to make. We ought to study carefully such a life and character, and see if it will stand the Bible test. Our lives are but sign-boards along life's pathway, and somebody is going to follow us. Will his example do to follow? Suppose *all* should follow it, where would you find the Church of God? If there is *one* duty taught plainly in the Bible, it is the duty of service. This duty he failed to perform. If there is another duty taught plainly by our Saviour, it is that he calls us to work. "Go ye into the vineyard, why stand ye here all the day idle?"

This man might have been a power for good, both in church and Sunday-school. He was well prepared to instruct the young, and had a happy way of communicating his thoughts and ideas to others, but like the people of Meroz, he "Came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Our sins of omission, which we consider trivial, and of little moment, may cause us to lose our souls. We often fail to appear

in our places in the sanctuary, in the Sabbath-school, and in the mid-week service of prayer and praise, for very slight and trivial causes. We think we won't be missed; we are not feeling very well, and it is so easy to have a headache. Are we not guilty of robbing God? Is this not our "reasonable service?" God forgive us for our sins of omission, and help us to be faithful!

Mr. Howze was a very infirm man, and suffered a great deal through life from nervous prostration. He was rarely ever free from headache, and would often suffer intensely for days at a time.

Mrs. Elizabeth James Howze, I must add a few words in regard to her consecrated, Christian life and character, I have spoken sufficiently of her hard laborious life as an educator, in training young ladies for usefulness, and of her faithfulness as a wife and mother. The great trial of her life was the Civil War. She had to send her *three* oldest sons into the army early in the great contest, and the *fourth*, later on. Two fell on the field of battle, two survived. These fiery trials seemed only to brighten her Christian character and increase her faith in God, and she emerged from its horrors, a stronger Christian, a more faithful worker, both in the Church and Sunday-school. She lived to see her children all grown, members of the church, and settled in life. The last year or so of her life was filled with suffering, from cancer of the stomach, but she bore her suffering with Christian fortitude, never complaining, always happy, and when the Bridegroom came, "He found her lamp trimmed and burning," and she was ready and prepared to enter into the "marriage supper." I have no words to describe that last tender talk with her children, and the loved ones who were gathered around her bed. A word of admonition for every one. A tender prayer for all. We felt we were very near the "gate of heaven."

## CHAPTER VII.

Mary Catherine Wilson, born October 12, 1820, in Madison county, Ala., and grew up and received her education while living in the first home of the family. On the 25th of April, 1839, she was married to John W. Campbell, a young lawyer, of Louisburg, Tenn., and settled in that town, where they lived three or four years. They then moved to Hernando, Desoto county, Miss., in 1844, where they lived for years. Seven children were born to this happy and loving couple—John W., Annie, Parker, Mary (Betty?), Catherine, Elizabeth (Molly?), Nicholas Wilson, and Sallie. Soon after the birth of Sallie, the father was stricken with congestive malarial fever, and lived only two or three days. Cut down in the prime of life, just when he was most needed to care for, educate and train his children for usefulness. He had established a fine, lucrative law practice, and had drawn around him a host of admiring influential friends, and his prospects of earthly happiness and emoluments were bright, indeed, but death came when he was least expecting it.

Mr. Campbell was a man greatly beloved by his neighbors and friends. He was kind to the poor, and ever ready to go to the relief of the distressed. He was a kind, indulgent father, and idolized his wife and children, but he was not a Christian. He had neglected the "one thing needful"; had made the great mistake.

The sorrow of that poor wife and mother was distressing to behold. She had the sympathy, prayers and advice of father, mother and sister and brothers, but to no avail, and not until she accepted Christ as her Saviour, and submitted to His chastening rod, did she receive com-

fort and strength to bear her great sorrow, and take up the burden of life. When a girl of twelve years, while attending a revival, or camp meeting, she had made a profession of religion, when under great excitement, physical and mental. When the meeting closed, and she had time to reflect, she found she had made a mistake, and this mistake had its effect upon her after life. She was the only one of the family who came into the church late in life, and proves the truth of God's word, "They that seek me *early*, shall find me," and common observation proves that they make the most consecrated Christians. My sister had a hard struggle to maintain and educate her family, but she summoned all the energies of her naturally strong mind and constitution, and with the assistance of father and friends, succeeded. The children were all bright and universal favorites, and her sons could get employment at the best wages when not in school. Her oldest son, John W., was serving in the County Clerk's Office, and the Sheriff's Office whenever he could be had, and it was said of him, that at the age of eighteen, he knew personally every man in his county. I have no doubt this was true, for an election for militia officers was ordered, and J. W. C.'s name was put on the ticket without his knowledge or consent. Had he known it he would not have suffered it, for he was too young to hold the office by two or three years. When the election came off, he received 1,800 out of 2,000 votes polled.

When the Ninth Mississippi Regiment was organized early in 1861, he enlisted as private, but was appointed adjutant of the regiment by Col. James R. Chalmers. When the term of service expired, General Patton Anderson appointed him A. D. C. on his staff with rank of captain. This position I think he held when he was

shot on the lines on Missionary Ridge in 1863. He had been sent to the lines with orders, and just as the enemy charged the lines, and drove our men down the mountain he was shot. He saw he would be captured in a few minutes, and he succeeded in dragging himself down the mountain wounded and bleeding, until he was rescued by the litter corps, and taken to a place of safety. He was promptly sent to the hospital, where every effort was made to save the young soldier's life, but to no avail. He died more from the injuries received in dragging himself from the battlefield, than from the fatal bullet. A noble soldier was lost to his country; a noble son was lost to a fond and doting mother. This was a terrible blow to my dear sister, and a severe test of her faith in the goodness and mercy of God.

At this late day we look back in astonishment at the fortitude and bravery of Southern mothers. Every day almost, brought news of death. Sorrow and mourning were wafted on every breeze, but still, I never knew a Southern mother to withhold her last boy when duty called him to the front. They thought they were right. They *knew* they were right and they discharged duty faithfully, trusting in God, and they received all needed grace and strength.

Time moved on, and the girls developed rapidly into young womanhood, and were like Job's daughters, "The fairest in the land." Beauty, wit and amiability, coupled with good sense and education in woman, will always command admiration. And we find the young ladies marrying as rapidly as they come of age, and settling down to the stern duties of wedded life. Nicholas, the youngest son, is the last to marry, and the mother soon finds herself alone: bereft of her children, but a kind protecting providence is around her, and she is blessed with health and

strength and the sorrows of the past are swallowed up in the prattle of laughter of her grandchildren springing up around her. Her oldest daughter, Annie (Mrs. Burch Kuhl), moves to Florida, and the mother follows, and enjoys for several years the oranges and the tropical fruits of that sunny land. Then, as old age creeps on, providentially, or otherwise, she turns her face towards home. She has known, never, but one home, the place where her married life was spent, and the father of her children was buried. The last years of her life were spent in Memphis, Tenn., with her daughter, Mollie (Mrs. Wooldridge), who cared for her faithfully and tenderly to the last. On the 17th of August, 1903, she fell asleep, aged eighty-two years and 10 months, the greatest age attained by any one of the family for one hundred years. Her body was taken by her children and friends back to the old home, and deposited in the cemetery by the side of the husband she buried fifty years before, the only man she ever loved.

Looking at this grand and flourishing branch of the parent tree, from a religious standpoint, we will find, I think, fewer consecrated lives, and a smaller percentage of church members, than in any we have investigated, and why is it? It cannot be attributed to anything else, except the want of early religious training in the home, when deep and lasting impressions are made upon the heart and conscience of the little child.

I have seen it stated somewhere, that a lady asked the Sage, Daniel Webster, in his old age, when she should commence the training of her child? His answer was: "Fifty years before its birth, madam."

I know too little of Mrs. Campbell's children to write up their history. Annie—Mrs. Kuhl—lives in Orlando, Fla., and has a growing family. One, at least,

grown and married, probably. Mollie—Mrs. Wooldridge—lives in Memphis, Tenn., has seven children, and seven or eight grandchildren. The other families, I do not know. This is, probably, the largest branch of the parent tree.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Benjamin Fisher Wilson, was born December 25, 1824, in Madison county, Ala. He received his early education in Alabama, his boyhood in Tennessee, and his finishing years in St. Thomas Hall, Holly Springs, Miss., an Episcopal institution of learning of high character. He commenced life teaching school, and taught for several years in North Mississippi. In January, 1851, my family "Record" tells me he was married to Miss Elizabeth Vermonta Snow. This beautiful and accomplished young lady was an orphan, and had come with my uncle's family from Dinwiddie county, Va., where she was born and educated, to North Mississippi. My uncle was her guardian, and loved her as dearly as he did his own daughter. Soon an affection sprang up between the young people, that could not be mistaken, and the parents on both sides began to throw cold water on the young flames, because of the nearness of kin, nothing more. But they soon discovered that their efforts were unavailing, and that the young folks were going to marry, "*nolens, volens*," and they decided to let them marry at home, in the old orthodox way, and make the "most of it."

Soon after the wedding, the young couple announced that they were going to the "Lone Star State." This announcement astonished both families, and caused my father and mother much sorrow. It was the first of the family to break away from home, and go far away—for Texas seemed a long way off in those days. No railroad west of the Mississippi, and a long journey by land, or voyage by water had to be made. They were told that they were going to a country infested with cut-throats



and ruffians. Nothing would deter the young couple, or induce them to change their plans. So they took boat at Memphis, Tenn., for New Orleans, thence by ship to Galveston, thence to Washington on the Brazos River, where they landed and commenced life.

It was a long time before the first letter came, telling of their safe arrival, and first impressions of the new country. Washington was the head of navigation on the Brazos, and a flourishing town of a thousand inhabitants, with bright prospects for the future. The second letter brought still better news, that the wanderers were in good health, well pleased with the country and people, and my brother had secured the town school, that would pay him a fine salary.

Prosperity smiled upon them for more than a year, when, alas! a letter came draped in mourning, announcing the death of the beautiful young mother, and that a little boy was left to the care of the sorrowing father.

Oh! how our hearts bled for our brother. The thought of his being so far from home, and among strangers, nearly prostrated our mother. But he found friends, sympathising friends, to comfort and assist him. For we always find friends in this world if we "show ourselves friendly," and deserve them.

On the 18th of March, 1854, my brother was married to Mrs. Mary E. Lusk, of Washington, Texas. The fruits of this marriage were three or four daughters. About this time my brother gave up teaching and began the drug business, in which he built up a flourishing trade. His son, Rollin, a bright boy, his father's companion, was almost raised to the drug business, in inheriting that peculiar family trait, love of medicine, soon developed into a practical druggist and pharmacist. This was a great help to the father, and under their com-

bined efforts and management their business flourished. Prosperity attended their every effort, and worldly prospects were bright, indeed, but a crushing blow befel the family. My brother was a sufferer from hemorrhoids, and a traveling "quack" came along professing to cure the trouble, by a slight surgical operation, *without pain*. He produced so many testimonials of his success, and evidence of the painlessness of the operation, that my brother consented to the operation. The "quack's" plan was to administer a dose of hydrate chloral, a new drug, which was just coming into use, which he claimed, would produce local anesthesia, and while in this condition he would operate without pain. The chloral was prepared, and swallowed, but in less time than is required to write it down, my brother was dead!! Imagination fails to picture the scene in that household! The shock was so great, they could not realize that death was before them, that a foul murder had been committed. But the guilty "quack" knew, and taking advantage of this period of shock, he vanished from Washington. It was well he acted promptly, for the officers of the law were soon upon his track, an incensed mob following them. But the murderer escaped.

This was a sad blow to all of us, but especially to Rollin. My brother's wife, and children—all girls—were no doubt greatly grieved, but it was different with Rollin. To him, my brother had been both father and mother, and all the years of his boyhood he had been his father's companion and pupil. My brother died intestate, and strange to tell, the laws of Texas gave all of the estate to his widow. She employed Rollin to close up and dispose of the drugs and store, which he did successfully, proving him to be a business man of ability and tact, though less than twenty years of age. His task ac-

complished, duty done, he turned his back upon Texas, and came back to his "kith and kin" in Mississippi, who were rejoiced to see him, and welcomed him to their hearts and homes.

Rollin soon engaged in business, and several years labor in Mississippi secured a position in Memphis, Tenn. Soon he was married to a most excellent and lovely woman, and they bought a home in the suburbs of Memphis, where they now reside. I had the pleasure of visiting this family two years ago, and I found a lovely Christian household. I found an altar erected, and it was not inscribed to the "Unknown God," for all were members of the Church, and pupils or teachers in the Sabbath-school.

## CHAPTER IX.

Robert Nicholas Joseph Wilson, was born April 5, 1828, in Madison county, Ala. He grew up on the farm, and was inured to work. He early developed a fondness for tools, and displayed wonderful ingenuity in manufacturing articles of utility connected with the household. My father complimented and encouraged him in his work. On father's going one day to the shop he found him intensely studying a singularly looking machine he had made, filled with wheels, springs and pullies. When asked, "What are you making?" He promptly replied, "Pa, I am going to discover perpetual motion." "What put such an idea in your head, my son?" asked my father, as he walked away in deep thought. The boy had been reading some man's effort in the same direction, and an idea entered his young head that he might be the happy inventor, and he was working out that idea. The incident throws a remarkably inquisitive and ingenious mind in one so young. He found an old clock that had not kept time for years, and took it all to pieces, and worked on it for two or three days, and then tried to put it together, but to his astonishment he had more wheels than he could find places for. After worrying over it for hours, he put it together, leaving out two or three wheels. When he set it up, and started the pendulum, to his delight, the old clock went to work in earnest, and kept on running. This feat made him famous among the children. Pretty soon he began to draw curious designs upon paper, and we began to wonder what was coming next. He began to put together a curiously-shaped machine, something like a huge bird. When questioned by my older brother, he gravely an-

swered, "I am making a flying machine." They began to laugh and twit him, and finally got him angry and crying, and that was the end of the flying machine. But say or think what you will, that boy was a genius. He was sixty years ahead of his age. And if he was living to-day, there might be a successful "aerial ship" at the St. Louis Fair." At any rate he might be classed among the scientists. His early education was in the home, and progressed considerably before he ever attended school. Before he was sixteen years old he was a member of the church and was so grave and quiet, and such an uncommon Bible student, that he was marked as the coming preacher of the family. As a schoolboy, he was noted for his proficiency in mathematics, and his great love of the classics and poets. At the age of twenty-two, he entered the sophomore class in the State university, Oxford, Miss., where he remained three years, graduating with second honors in his class. The reports sent home by the Faculty during these years were so flattering that we became proud of our collegian. And when graduation day arrived, I was sent over to enjoy the exercises, and bring my distinguished brother home. It was my first visit to the University, and I was old enough to enjoy everything I saw and heard. The last exercises of the occasion was an "Oratorical Contest" by the two literary societies of the College, "Phi Sigma and Hermean." Two orators from each. My brother was one, chosen by his society, Hermean, and I found his name last on the beautiful programme, lavishly distributed through the audience. I remember only the subject of my brother's oration. The others, I have long since forgotten. It was this: "The Gardens of Thought and the Wilds of Imagination." A splendid subject for a young collegian, you see, to get rid of his gas. When we reached his room I asked him to let me see his ora-

tion. Said he, "It will take you sometime to read it. Wait a little while and we will walk out into the woods, and I will recite it for you." As we walked along, he said, "I know they will applaud me to-night, and I am afraid it will put me out." The rehearsal was perfect, and I suppose it was a fine oration for such an occasion, and I told him by no means to let the applause disconcert him, just to stop, use his pocket handkerchief, or take a sip of water, and start again.

Night came at last, and when we reached the auditorium, it was filled with the *elite* of Oxford, and the State. Every student had his girl, and all had come to enjoy themselves on this last night of the commencement exercises. The 8 o'clock bell struck; there was a lull in the general conversation, and the first orator came forward on the stage and commenced his oration. He was listened to attentively for a short while, and received some applause, but before he was half through his oration, the hum of conversation commenced in the rear, and on the outskirts, and only those in front could hear the orator. The second oration was listened to with much less attention, and not one in twenty (without the programme), could tell what the student was talking about. It was even worse during the third, and when my brother's turn came, the confusion was so great, that an old, white-haired gentleman, arose, and begged the audience to keep order. I felt thankful.

My brother commenced, and waded through his oration, presenting many rare and fragrant flowers, but he failed to arouse that hilarious crowd of young people to even one slight hand-clapping, and retired from the rostrum with a face of crimson, all his sweetness wasted, all of his beautiful flowers unappreciated. I was filled with wrath, and heartily disgusted with commencement exercises.



Soon after graduation, my brother commenced reading law, in Hernando, Desoto county, Miss., and teaching in the town high school or college. Thus was he engaged when the Civil War came on, and upset all our "best-laid schemes," and blasted our brightest prospects.

Just before enlisting in the C. S. Army, in 1862, he was united in marriage to Miss Emma Deloach, of Collierville, Tenn., a lady of education and refinement, who made him a faithful and loving wife.

After the close of the Civil War, in which he served in the First Mississippi Calvary Regiment, Col. Pinson Jackson's brigade, Forrest's command, the happy couple, with their little son, Robert, settled on a farm near Collierville, Tenn., where they have ever lived.

The following letter received from his daughter, some time ago gives the full history of the family, which shows that the family has been remarkably blessed of God, and promises to become a fruitful one.

Following is the letter :

COLLIERVILLE, TENN., June 1st, 1905.

My dear Uncle Jim :

How often have I had it in my mind to write to you and remind you that your brother, Nicholas, has some descendants who would be so glad to know and love you for his dear sake. I presume you come to Memphis sometimes, and I wish you would remember us, and run out to spend several days. You probably do not know much about papa's family, so I'll begin with mamma and give our history. Since the children all married and deserted the home nest, mamma has kept house alone, and run the farm. Usually she had only a colored girl to sleep in the house for company, and we disliked to see her so alone in her old age, and have at last persuaded her to

rent the farm and live with us. She calls our house home, and visits the others as she pleases. She is hale and hearty and contemplates a trip to California this summer. Robert, her oldest son, lives here in Collierville. He has his second wife and four children, three by his first marriage. He has been in the mail service ever since he was grown, and through his own efforts, and with the property of his first wife, he is pretty well-to-do. His oldest daughter, just seventeen, is a very sweet, attractive girl. The others are boys, the youngest five years old. Ed. married Donnie Howze, you remember, and has been in California for five years. He is in railroad business, and is doing well. They have a niece in Berkeley, a suburb of San Francisco. Donnie and Ed. both spent last Christmas at home with us, and she remained till February.

Ed. is anxious for mamma to make them a visit. He can get her a pass from New Orleans. They have never had any children, and took a great fancy to my oldest boy, and kept him with them two years, to go to the splendid High School in Berkeley. They wanted him to make it his home, but I had to have him nearer than that.

Jim, named for you, married several years ago, and lived in Nashville until a year ago last January. He took the California fever, and sold his household goods, got passes from Ed. and left to make his home in the "Golden State." They were homesick, and never satisfied, and bent their efforts toward saving enough to move back on, which they did in February. They are back in Nashville now, "busted," but happy. Stenography is his profession. They have one child, James Adrian, Jr.

Bickham, the youngest boy, married three years ago. He lived with mamma a year, but found it so inconvenient to go back and forth to his "run" (for he also is in the



mail service) that he moved to Memphis. They have had one child that died at its birth. His wife, a lovely woman in face and character, has no constitution, and no strength.

Now I will tell you about myself.

In a few days I will have been married twenty years, and as I look back, they seem but a "tale that is told." These twenty years have been laden with happiness, and have brought only one deep grief—dear papa's death. I have seven children, all strong in body and mind, and all goodly to look upon. Bourdon, the oldest, graduated last summer from the Berkeley High School, Cal., and in the fall, took a position with N. C. Early & Co., in Memphis, wholesale grocers.

He was only eighteen, and began with a salary of fifty dollars a month, which showed that he had a little more ability than most boys of that age. He is a fine boy, and has brought us nothing but joy from the day of his birth. My next child, Ruth, is just home from school in Memphis. She stayed with Bick and attended St. Mary's Episcopal School. She is nearly as old as I was when I married—seventeen—but I am glad to say *she* has no such notions in her head. She intends to go to school another year and then teach. Alfred, the third, is a handsome, bright boy, fourteen, much fonder of play than of books or work. He is witty and talkative, and very popular with men as well as boys. The next two are girls, Mary and Wilson, twelve and ten years. They both stand high in their classes. Wilson received a little gold medal from her teacher for the greatest number of headmarks. The last two, William seven and a half, and Adrian, four, are perfect treasures. Everything a body could wish two little boys to be.

Mr. Holden has been a merchant in this place for

fourteen years. He has managed to keep his large family supplied with all the necessities of life, with its comforts, and occasionally some of the luxuries.

Yours affectionately,

KATE HOLDEN.

This branch of the family tree, one Episcopalian in faith, through the influence of the mother. My brother joined that church after marriage, and made an efficient vestryman during life. He was an industrious, hard-working farmer, and a painstaking educator in the public schools of his county, and was tutor of Greek in the High School of Collierville when he died. In 1893 he came out to Alma, and spent three weeks or more with us. A visit we enjoyed, and which I shall never forget. We had been separated for years, but I found him the same affectionate loving brother, the same man of prayer, the same humble, trusting Christian. When we parted at the depot, we shook hands for the last time, but we will meet again!

## CHAPTER X.

Martha Dennis Wilson, born in Madison county, Ala., June 19, 1830. She grew up with, and was, educated with the older children, taught mostly by her parents, and reached Mississippi in 1843, where her academic education really commenced under the tutelage of her older sister, Mrs. Howze. She was a bright, sprightly girl and a great reader, and a great lover of home, and home life. I think of her now as my "good sister." She was kind, affectionate, lovely and lovable; fond of children and always ready to comfort us in our troubles. Particularly attentive to the wants and comforts of those around her. She soon developed into an accomplished young lady, with fine musical talent, and splendid voice. She was a fine music teacher, and was always in demand.

She was early admitted into the church, and was through life an humble, loving follower of her Saviour.

She was married to Andrew M. Hardin, of Marshall county, Miss., on March 18, 1851, and in a few weeks returned with her husband to his place of business in Yazoo City, Miss., where he was merchandizing.

We bade her good-bye with many tears and prayers, and it proved to be a final parting, for we never saw her sweet face again. But we shall see her soon!

About two years after marriage, my sister was stricken with malarial dysentery, and died in a few days, even before a letter reached us, apprising us of her illness. This was a great shock to the whole family, as it was the first adult member of the household to die. A little, bright girl of a year old, Elizabeth, was left to the care of the grandmother, who nursed it tenderly to

girlhood. At her grandmother's death, Mr. Hardin carried Lizzie to St. Louis, where he was engaged in business, and put her in school where she was educated. Soon after her school days she was married to James Barton, a distant relative of Mr. Hardin. The young couple, I think, settled in Crittenden county, Ark. In one short year the mother died, leaving a little boy, who soon followed its mother, and the family was blotted out.

A dead branch on the parent tree! A sad, mysterious dispensation of Divine Providence! Who can understand it? The sweet words of our Savior come ringing down through the centuries, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," and we leave the dead branch in His hands, and submit, and wait and believe, for

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain,  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain."

## CHAPTER XI.

Clara Fisher Wilson was born on the 18th of March, 1833, in Madison county, Ala., and grew up in the family with brothers and sisters. There is so little change in a well-regulated Presbyterian family that the history of one child is the history of all.

The children are born, taken into covenant relation with Jehovah. The parents are the second party in the covenant, and must train the child for heaven and for usefulness in this world. It is simple, it is beautiful. It is God's way! God keep us to be faithful!

Clara Fisher Wilson was married to William F. Baker, on the 3rd of November, 1852, in Marshall county, Miss. This was a happy marriage, both contractors were Christians. Husband a devout Methodist, wife a consecrated Presbyterian. And something unusual, both retained their church affiliations through life, and I don't suppose there ever was a shadow of trouble about it. They dedicated their children in infancy, and raised them up in "nurture and admonition of the Lord," and when they grew up they decided for themselves. Mr. Baker was a merchant when married, and merchandized in Coldwater, Miss., all his life, except, probably, three or four years during and after the Civil War, the family lived on a farm. But the family lived and matured in Coldwater, Miss. After the death of the parents, the children married and moved to Arkansas. The four families which sprang from this branch of the parent tree, are: William F., John W., Mattie Dennis and George W.

My brother and sister lost two children early in life, Lizzie and Elijah. They were children of the covenant.

Later on, an older son, fourteen or fifteen years of age, was killed on the railroad. Jimmie (namesake of the writer) was a bright, promising boy, but wayward and disobedient. He was a great favorite with the railroad men and they would take him down the road and return before night. But once, the train was delayed several hours and reached Coldwater—Jimmie's station—late in the night, and the boy was missing. I will not attempt to describe the distress and excitement produced, but will state that when found his head was crushed, showing that he was killed instantly, being knocked off the top of the box car by a bridge under which the train was passing. This was a great shock to his mother, and to all the family, and the mother had nothing but the covenant promise to plead, and to comfort her in this trying hour. It is terrible to think your child is lost, but when we remember the boundless mercy and love of God and that He is Sovereign, it is comforting indeed to be able to plead God's covenant promise.

Wm. F. Baker was born in Tyro, Marshall County, Miss., in 1854, and grew up in the store with his father; whenever he was not in school he was behind the counter. And it is not at all strange that he has followed the business all his life, in Mississippi, then in Alma, Ark. He was married to Miss Ida Sloan, of Coldwater, Miss., the daughter of Dr. A. B. Sloan, a noted dentist and elder in the Presbyterian church. They were married when he was only twenty, and she, seventeen. The *children* began house keeping for several years, and had their parents near them to advise and comfort them when in trouble. This family has been signally blessed with health. Eight children have blessed their union—five good-looking girls and three bright, promising boys—and not a serious case of illness has occurred among them,

and a coffin has never crossed their threshold, and both parents still young and in excellent health. Surely they have great cause for thankfulness, and ought to show it in their lives and in the government and training of these immortal souls for heaven and usefulness in this life. Oh! that we might realize the awful responsibility that rests upon us as parents. This family came from Mississippi to Alma, Arkansas, where they lived for several years, and then moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, for the benefit of its graded schools and University. After several years they moved to the Indian Territory, and are now living in the city of Ardmore. Mr. Baker has always been a merchant.

John Wesby Baker, the second son, followed closely in the footsteps of his brother. They were partners in business for years, and when connected were always prosperous. When they closed out in Mississippi, John moved to Sulphur Rock, Ark., and Will, to Alma. In three years John followed his brother to Alma, where, they together, built up a thriving business. Will for reasons assigned, moved to Fayetteville, Ark., and in a year or so John followed him, and again they built up a prosperous business which enabled them to educate their children. They are separated now, and have been for four or five years, but they seem to be moving towards each other again.

In early life, John Wesby married Miss Alice Quinn, of De Soto county, Miss., the daughter of a consecrated Christian gentleman. Four living children are the result. The two oldest sons have just finished their college course, and are just now commencing life. The two youngest, Mattie and John, are at home. Two little boys sleep out here in our cemetery. *They are safe!* Numberless dangers beset the pathway of the older boys



and nothing but the religion of Christ Jesus will protect them. Won't you accept the free gift, boys?

Martha Dennis Baker, the idol of the household in childhood, developed into a lovely woman, of fine musical attainments, soft and mellow voice, and of a most amiable and affectionate disposition.

Mattie Baker was a general favorite from childhood. She was married to Mr. Robert Harris, of Coldwater, Miss. They were very happy, and general favorites in the town. But their happiness was of short duration. Death came and claimed the husband, and Mattie was left with a wee baby girl to comfort her. Time, the healer of heart wounds and troubles, rolled on, and Mattie, with her beautiful child of four summers, came out to Alma, Ark., to visit her brothers, and spend the summer. Mattie was as lovely as the girl of yore, and soon won the heart of a young widower of the town, Mr. J. H. Bolling, and a wedding is soon announced, and duly celebrated, and the happy couple settled down quietly. Mr. Bolling had two children, a boy and girl, and when they came home they soon learned to love their stepmother and little Clara. They were a harmonious, happy family. Mr. Bolling was a merchant, and a member of the Presbyterian Church, and a valuable deacon. These pleasant relations continued for two or three years, and then, death "came knocking at the door." The precious wife and mother is taken, children are made orphans, and sorrow, deep and black, rests upon the whole family. "Oh! Death, where is thy sting?" Mattie was a devoted Christian, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mrs. Bolling left a lovely little boy, one year old, named Burwell, after our dear pastor, Rev. R. S. Burwell, now of the Synod of Tennessee. This dear little



boy, the writer and his wife took to their hearts and home, to love and care for, and I am afraid to become the idol of the household. He was too bright and beautiful for this old world, and the Lord took him to a brighter one. I am afraid we never became perfectly reconciled to little Burwell's death, but we bowed to the rod and tried to submit.

Clara was left alone! For several years she lived with her uncle, but for the last four or five years, she has lived with her aunt, Mrs. Thos. J. Eason, of Fayetteville, and has been attending the State University. She has now graduated, and will make her home with her uncle, J. W. Baker, who lives in Oklahoma City.

Clara is a promising girl, and has inherited the musical talent and taste of her mother, and is fully qualified to make a useful woman.

George Wilson Baker, was born in Coldwater, Miss., and came with his brothers to Alma, Ark., where he was for several years employed in their mercantile operations. He married Miss May Reed, daughter of E. T. Reed, Esq., of Crawford county. His young wife lived but a few years, and left George two bright, lovely girls, Nannie and Wilda, to care for. The grandparents took the little girls to their home, and have cared for them kindly and kept them in school.

A year or two ago George married Miss Lilly Peaden, of Washington county, and the young couple live in Oklahoma City, and I hope are doing well. George ought to do well, he is a business man of ability, a fine salesman, and very popular. But George will do wrong sometimes, and causes a great deal of sorrow and mortification. He is a good Methodist, and will practice "falling from grace." If he would only *believe* the horrible doctrine, and not practice it, no harm would be done. No

one would be injured. The prayers of the righteous will not go unanswered, and many are on record for the erring ones. Again, we thank God for giving Christian parents, who taught us by precept and example to fear God, and do the right.

W. F. Baker, Sr., and his wife, Clara F. Baker, left a bright and shining example for their children to follow. They were full of faith, and testified to the last, that the religion of Jesus was sufficient. Father and husband was called first, and the patient, faithful mother was left a few years longer to her children and loved ones. Her last days were full of suffering from cancer, but she bore her suffering with fortitude and patience, never complaining. Her mind was bright and clear to the last, and as the end drew near, I asked her if "All is well?" "Oh, yes," she answered, "I know in whom I have believed, and He is able to keep what I have committed to His charge." In a few hours she fell asleep, "Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep!"

## CHAPTER XII.

After tracing out the seven limbs of the family tree, I return now to the old Alabama home, and write up the history of the parent stock to the point I have reached in my history. The children have been growing up and going to school to their fathers, who had to teach, *nolens volens*, because competent teachers were few and hard to obtain. The oldest are now nearing their majority. The old home must be given up. The tender ties of twenty years must be severed, and the family moved to Lincoln county, Tenn., in the winter of 1839.

Why this move was made I do not know, probably the desire prevalent among tillers of the soil to find a "better country" was chief, and I have no doubt that church privileges and educational advantages had a great deal to do with it.

My father bought land two miles west of Petersburg, Tenn., then a thriving town, now a considerable railroad city. In this home, the family lived six or seven years, farming, and raising hogs principally for market. Every fall and winter, my father, with two oldest sons, and hands sufficient, would make a trip to South Alabama with a drove of fat hogs, and two wagon loads of cured bacon, and would be gone from home two months and often longer. This was hard work, and would keep them from home so long that my father was soon convinced that it was not the best thing for the family. But I must not forget to record that an interesting event occurred about this time, especially, as it was the last of its kind in the family. Consulting the record in that dear old family Bible, I find that Le Grand James Wilson, fourth son of James and Elizabeth J. Wilson, was born April 8th, 1836, in Lincoln county,

Tenn. The last, as well as the first, is a marked event in every family.

In studying up this history, I am forced to believe from results, that this move from Alabama to Tennessee was the mistake of his life, as a "farmer." What was gained in other respects I do not know. He found a rocky country, rough, and unsuitable for himself, his sons, or his negro hands. He tried the meat business, but that kept him away from home so much, and interfering with the training of the children, home duties and responsibilities, that he decided to make a change. So about the fall of 1842, he sent his oldest son, George, on a prospecting tour to North Mississippi. The trip was made on horseback. A big trip to think of now, but George made a similar trip the fall before to Lexington, Ky., to attend medical lectures, and returned in the spring, double the distance.

So he started on his long ride about the middle of September, and reached his destination, Marshall county, Miss., in the midst of the cotton season, which charmed him, and charms any one who sees it for the first time. His letters soon satisfied my father that Mississippi was a better country for him, and family, and he began at once to make preparations to move. The farm was sold, the corn, wheat, hay, etc. A year's supply was disposed of. The little crop of ten bales of cotton was gathered, ginned and sold, and the preparations for the move were nearing completion, when a trouble came up. One of the negro men, Dick, a pretty good carpenter and blacksmith, had married a neighbor's negro woman, and had a family of three or four children. Summer, a man belonging to the same neighbor, had married a young woman of my father's. This move would separate husbands and wives. My father seemed to have overlooked it

in his eagerness to get ready for the move, and when his attention was called to it, he was very much troubled. Dick's wife and children were valued at \$3,000. Summer \$800. He could not invest, for he would need all the cash on hand to buy a home as soon as he reached Mississippi. In this dilemma, he went to neighbor Mayhew and tried to sell, but he refused to invest. My father was very much troubled about it, but, finally, went to Mr. Mayhew, and proposed to swap Dick for Summer, and finally, as he could do no better, gave Dick for Summer, although Dick was worth, in the market several hundred dollars the more, on account of his knowledge and experience as a blacksmith and carpenter. I never knew him to sell one of his negroes, and he would only buy to prevent separation of husband and wife. Early in December, we started for North Mississippi. The family had increased a good deal since the great move from Virginia to Alabama. The negroes now numbered forty, old and young, and there were none older than my parents. Whites, nine. A drove of more than one hundred hogs, twenty head of cattle, mostly milch cows, and several head of horses, and, "*mirabile dictu*," a drove of forty turkeys. It looked a little like Jacob returning from Padanaram. After the first two or three days, we made an average of twelve miles per day. One of the boys was sent ahead every day to select a camping place, buy a load of corn for the hogs, shuck it, and have everything in readiness, so you see we had to have one extra wagon for this work. We were on the road for five weeks and reached our destination in January, 1843. My brother, George, had the best place rented he could find, and we were soon under shelter, and comparatively comfortable for emigrants. Hogs were in demand, and my father had no trouble to sell all he had,

after killing and salting up enough for the family for one year. The winter of '43 was noted for earthquakes, for the big snow in March, which is still remembered, and the great Comet. The Millerites were predicting the end of the world in April or May, and were making all their arrangements for the grand day, and when the great luminous Comet began to ascend the sky they felt certain that their calculations were correct, and the end was near at hand. The ignorant declared it was useless to work or plant a crop. And when the big snow melted, and the ground dried sufficiently, and my father started every plow he could raise, many actually said that the old man was crazy!

The labors of the farmer were greatly blessed that year, and an abundant crop was gathered. From sixty acres we picked forty-eight heavy bales of cotton. The corn and sweet potatoes were also extra fine. The whole family, white and black, were well pleased, and all were happy.

My father made two crops before buying a home, but he finally found one to suit him, five miles northeast of Chulahoma, Marshall county, Miss. This was a beautiful home of 640 acres, a good roomy house (log), neatly painted, also comfortable negro quarters, ginhouse and cotton press, with barns, stables, carriage house, etc. A most valuable piece of property. There were 250 acres in cultivation, and an abundance of fine timber. We settled down to farm life in Mississippi in 1845. The oldest brother, practicing medicine, next teaching; the third, with my two youngest sisters, was at home, but all in school.

There was a small congregation of Presbyterians in Chulahoma, and the family was welcomed to the fold, but they had no church, and had services only once a



month in the Baptist Church. The pastor was Rev. A. W. Young, native of Kentucky, a man of sterling piety, and a good preacher. He had the care of three or four small churches in a radius of twenty miles, and taught school to help him to support his family; like Paul, "laboring with his own hands," to lighten the burden upon his people. In fact, I don't know what we would have done at that early day, if our preachers had not been teachers also. They were a blessing to the whole community. My father was soon installed elder in this little church, which he served faithfully for many years. He was emphatically a working Christian, and at once began talking up a church. A lot was secured, and the subject was canvassed freely in and out of the church. The great trouble was procuring the necessary lumber, sawmills being "few and far between," and the only sure source of supply was Memphis, Tenn., sixty miles away. This made the building of a church, or any considerable edifice, a formidable undertaking. But, "Where there is a will, there is a way." So he kept his subscription list before the people, to be paid in the fall, when the cotton crop brought money into the country. When his own crop was cultivated, about the middle of July, he got out his old reliable "whipsaw," which had been stowed away for twenty-five years; the fristine "sawmill" of the emigrant, and went into the forest, and by the first of September, all the necessary framing lumber for the new church was on the ground, and work commenced.

The cotton soon began to roll off to Memphis, and all the shingles, doors, flooring, siding, etc., were brought back by the planters "free of cost." By the time cold weather was over, and plastering could be safely done, the house was rushed to completion, and at the Spring meeting of Presbytery, a new church was reported ready



for dedication, "free from debt," which was really an *event* in the early history of Presbyterianism in North Mississippi. The work had been accomplished, no one hardly knew how, no burden placed on any one man, the necessary means had been furnished willingly. God had blessed the effort of his children and all were happy. When that church was dedicated, the little flock had a glorious day, "a high day," and after the "feast of fat things," returned to their homes with joy and gladness. On the records of this church can be found the name of every member of my father's family, but they soon began to move their membership to other churches, where in the providence of God their lot was cast.

I must testify to the faithfulness of my father as a Presbyter. He loved to attend this court of his church, and was often on this account chosen as a representative. I have known him to ride fifty or sixty miles on horseback to Presbytery, when he was an old man. And his house was often the gathering place for delegates to meet and start. As he grew older, his faith in Presbyterianism, as a blessing to the world, and the principles of the old Whig party, as a blessing to the country, grew stronger and stronger. And as the war clouds began to rise in the Northern sky, and secession whispered in the South, he took a strong, uncompromising stand for the Union. He believed that secession would produce a long, bloody war. But when his State in convention passed unanimously the ordinance of secession, his mouth was closed, and I never heard him murmur, or speak a harsh word against the North, until the General Assembly, in 1861, in Philadelphia, refused to receive the Southern delegates, and branded them as traitors, heretics and scismatics. This was too much for the Camel's back, and he was converted, and nothing but the weight

of threescore years and ten kept him at home. He was a genial companion, a true friend, a good neighbor; always ready to help the distressed, comfort the sorrowing, and aid the needy. He was a kind husband and father; and I never saw him correct one of his children but once, and I did not see much of that, but felt it. One morning, my father was sitting on the portico, deeply absorbed reading his church paper, "The True Witness." I came 'round in front of him and commenced making a wedge with his hatchet, which was very sharp, he looked up and saw what I was doing, he said, "Hold, I will make your wedge," but young America kept pegging away at his wedge until it suited him, when all at once, in a twinkling, the thought occurred to him to play a practical joke upon his father, down came the axe and springing to my feet, I exclaimed, "Oh!" as if in great pain and clapping my finger to my mouth. Farther was frightened, and springing out of the portico, reached my side, exclaiming, "I told you to stop; I knew you would hurt yourself! Let me see!" When he saw the joke perpetrated, I saw a mischievous twinkle in his eye, but he never spoke. Taking me by the arm, he quietly walked to the rear of the house, and introduced me gracefully to a blooded peach tree growing there. Well, I took my medicine; and strange to say, I have never felt the least inclination to frighten anyone, or to play off a practical joke, and I have never been exceedingly fond of peaches. While he rarely used the rod, he considered it a most useful implement in every household and schoolroom.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## MOTHER.

I have reached the point in my history to speak of my mother, and I feel like removing my shoes. It is hallowed ground! She was all the sweet name implies to me. Some one has said that the three sweetest words in the English language, are Mother, Home and Heaven. I know that the Christian mother makes the true home to the child; the very next place to heaven! It was her tender voice that told me first of God, and taught my childish lips to lisp, "Now I lay me down to sleep," for I can almost feel the warm good-night kiss upon my lips, yea, almost see her sweet face to-night. Thanks be to God for giving me a Christian mother, and grant that I may never disgrace her name or memory by any act of mine. My mother was a closet Christian. And every day, during my childhood, and boyhood, have I seen her enter that secret place of prayer, and remain for a season with her Bible and her God. That little closet became a sacred place to me, and I looked upon that worn, but well-kept Bible, lying upon the little shelf, with awe and veneration. That Bible, she probably had read all her life, for she brought it with her from Virginia, the paternal home. Many of its pages were marked with tear drops, that had fallen from her precious eyes, while communing with her God.

Mother was a great lover of children, and would gratify their every reasonable desire, but she was very firm in refusing things we ought not to have, and we soon learned when she said "No," it was useless to ask or bandy words. Her house was the dearest spot on

earth to her own and her grandchildren, and once a year, on Christmastide, they had to meet and spend, at least, one day and night with grandpa and grandma. It was the yearly picnic for the family, and all made an effort to be on hand on the evening of the 24th. The children came, and the grandchildren came, and I wondered often how they would take care of the crowd, but that never bothered her for a moment, and she would not only take care of them, and make them comfortable, but would fill them with the sweetest of good things, even after her health gave way, and she was almost an invalid.

The last year of her life was filled with suffering, but she bore her suffering with patience and fortitude. As she drew near the end, she called us all around her, and exhorted us to be true and faithful to God, and meet her in heaven.

I find this record in my Bible, written by my father:

"Elizabeth Joseph Wilson departed this life, May 1st, 1861, after a life of persevering industry and economy, in full reliance of the Christian hope."

He knew her better than any one else. They had walked life's journey side by side for forty-seven years, sharing its joys and sorrows, its sunshine and shadows, and now separated by death, he felt his great loss.

My father lived ten years longer, and four of these were years of trial and sorrow. War was in the land. His children and grandchildren were called to the service of their country, and he was kept at home by the weight of threescore years and ten. But he was strong and vigorous, and was more useful to his children and grandchildren, than in any four years of his life. He kept up the old homestead, and had his two youngest sons' wives to care for, with the little ones, while they were away fighting for their country. He kept up his farming,

raising corn, meat, potatoes, peas, etc., but very little cotton. And succeeded in feeding and clothing the negroes, and his little household; although the Federal Cavalry, two or three times, stripped him of everything in the shape of food. The negroes were faithful, and would run off the stock and save them from the raiders, but it required eternal vigilance. The people had a system of signalling, that was really interesting, and very effective, and saved them a great deal.

A raid would start from Memphis. As soon as the people could ascertain which road it would take, a horn would blow, and it would be taken up and down the line on that road, and in thirty minutes the people would be warned for twenty or thirty miles. negroes were very faithful and never failed to hear the signal at night. This gave the people time to hide their provisions and their stock. The surrender of the Southern armies was about over by the 1st of May. My father's crop was about planted, and he planted more than he had done for two or three years. About the 15th of May, he called all the negroes up, and told them they were free, and could go, if they desired, and find homes for themselves, and make their own contracts for the year. They were astonished and speechless. After waiting for them to speak, my father said, "All who desire to go, rise to your feet." Not *one* moved. Father said, "Now, I will make you a proposition. If you go on as you have begun, cultivate and gather the crop, as you have always done, obey orders, and behave yourselves, I will feed and clothe you, as I have always done, and if the crop pays expenses, and there is anything over, I will divide among you. The old home will be broken up this fall. I can't live by myself, I will try to rent the land, as it is impossible to sell it."

"*Thankee*, Master, we will do our best," came from all sides, and the conference ended.

The year 1865 was more than an average crop year, and everything produced well, but provisions were so high and scarce that it did not more than pay out. The corn used in cultivating the crop cost more than one dollar per bushel; middling meat, 33 1-3 cents per pound, and everything else in proportion.

The time came to break up the old home. It was a very sad day! The negroes had made their contracts for another year, and started away in tears. Summer, an old man now, came to me and said, "Mass Jim, I want to go wid you." "All right, Uncle Summer, I will do the best I can for you." Taking my father and Summer, we started for my home at Tyro, bidding the old home farewell!

My father lived with his children the rest of his days. Whenever he could be a comfort to, or of any service, he felt it his duty to go, though he considered the house of his youngest son "his home." All vied in their efforts to make him comfortable and happy. When seventy-eight or nine years old, a very suspicious ulcer made its appearance upon his right cheek. He had always been a remarkably healthy man up to the advent of this cancer; he would walk ten or more miles a day, and was very fond of hoeing in the garden, and cultivating the flowers and vegetables, but when this cancer commenced its deadly work, his strength gave way rapidly, and we saw his days "were numbered."

Sometime before his death, he called my wife and told her to go and get such and such articles of clothing, and bring them to him, and said, "Look over them, Betty, for I want you to see that I am buried in them." When we sent to the undertaker, he had given him exact direc-



tions in regard to making his coffin. His resting place had been marked out for ten years. So when the summons came he had nothing to do but close his eyes and fall asleep, aged eighty years, seven months and 1 day. His oldest daughter, his youngest son with his wife, were kneeling by his side when he breathed his last.

The last record in the old family Bible must be recorded here, and then I am done:

"James Wilson died Nov. 6th, 1871, near Tyro, Tate county, Miss., in the home of his youngest son who nursed him in his last illness, closed his eyes in death, and prepared his body for burial. He was buried in the family cemetery near Wall Hill, Miss., by the side of his wife, among his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren."

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord! Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."



## CHAPTER XIV.

Le Grand J. Wilson, the youngest son, and the last branch of the parent tree, was born, as previously stated, in Lincoln county, Tenn., April 8, 1836. He was reared from childhood in Marshall county, Miss. As a boy he was noted for his great love of the Bible and history, and his memory. He read the entire Bible before he was twelve years old, which very much pleased his father, who often called him his "Concordance," to encourage him in reading and studying, he supposes.

I received my academic education in "Union Academy," Marshall county, Miss., under the tutelage of the Rev. Samuel I. Reid, an alumnus of Washington College, Penn., who came South early in life, soon after finishing his theological course. His first pastorate was the Oxford Church, afterwards he was pastor for years of the Chulahoma (Wilson) Church, and was so intimately connected with the family for four years, as tutor, pastor, and friend, baptising the children, marrying the young people, and burying the dead, that he is entitled to this page in the family history. I was under him for four years in "Union Academy," and then commenced teaching, reading medicine under Dr. Geo. A. Wilson, and William M. Compton. I taught school for five months, only, but closely studied the medical text-books for two years. I then attended my first course of lectures in the University of Nashville, Tenn., returning in the spring of 1857, I commenced the practice of medicine one month before I was twenty-one years old. I had four established physicians living around me, none of them more than six or eight miles from my office. And they told the people they would give me all the aid

and counsel needed "free of cost." This launched the boy doctor, *instantly*, into an active practice. These eighteen months of active service under the eyes of experienced men, were of incalculable value to me. In fact, of really more value than the same time spent in a city hospital. In September, 1858, I matriculated in Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, and passed a successful examination about the last of March next. In one hour after receiving my notice, I started home to my mother, not waiting for "commencement" to receive my diploma. I found her much weaker, health rapidly failing, and I determined never to leave her again. So I remained at home and gave up my old location, where I had made some reputation as a young physician, and made a new start in the practice of medicine. I regretted this very much but I could not leave my mother for the sake of making money; and as my history proves, this was the best thing for me.

"There is a divinity that shapes our ends."

On the 28th of February, 1860, I was married to Miss Elizabeth Carey Skipwith, of Memphis, Tenn. Six or seven years before we had been schoolmates in "Union Academy." She, a girl of twelve, I, a boy of fifteen. The male and female departments were about a quarter of a mile apart, but not too far apart to keep us from meeting frequently, for boys and girls will meet, however hard you may try to prevent it. Soon the boys and girls began to accuse us of being "sweethearts." This continued about a year, and the childish reports began to reach ears of the "old folks."

An old aunt with whom Miss Betty was residing, dreamed, I supposed she dreamed it, that we were going to run off and get married, something that had never entered our childish heads. At any rate, when school "was

out" her sire came and carried his daughter off to the State Capital, 200 miles away, and put her in school, and the old aunt's mind became calm and serene, and I was left to sing:

"The years creep slowly by, Lorena,  
Since last I held thy hand in mine."

But there was not a particle of truth in the tender couplet, for I had never held her hand in mine," and the years were not creeping by slowly either, for seven had passed, and the schoolboy had developed into the hard-working physician. Enchanted with his practice, and on his way one evening to visit a very sick patient, called by his brother's to seek advice in regard to said patient. On entering the family room, there knelt my little "sweetheart" of seven years ago, her beautiful hair falling over her shoulders, developed into a handsome, lovely woman, bathing the head and face of my sister, who was scorching with fever.

"A ministering angel thou." I suddenly felt something! It must have been one of Cupid's heaviest darts, for my heart was slightly dislocated, and it has never gotten back into its right place. "Where did you come from? When did you come?" were questions rapidly asked and answered. "How long will you be at your uncle's?" "One week," she answered. "May I visit you to-morrow evening?" "If you desire to." "I will be there at 1:30 o'clock. Good-bye!"

We lived sixteen miles from the railroad and the trains came out late in the evening and returned early next morning to Memphis. That night her brother came out for his sister. Her aunt's little son was accidentally killed on the railroad, and she was prostrated with grief,

and sent for her niece. They were compelled to start by 3 A. M. to reach the morning train, so when I called at 3 P. M. as appointed, I was sadly disappointed. Owing to the grief of the family for little Frank, professional labors, and my sick mother, we did not meet for six long weeks. Then we had our interview. Then the wooing was done! And in short order, the day—a memorable day in our lives—was appointed, and I returned home happier than I had ever been before. When the baby of the family reached home with his young bride, there was great rejoicing, but in a very quiet way.

She was personally known to every member of the family, and there was none of the embarrassment that would have been felt had she been a stranger.

Brothers, sisters, and a goodly number of young people, some of them her own schoolmates, were there to welcome us, and it was an enjoyable reception. A few parties and dinings were given the young couple, and the happy event passed into history. The young couple settled down to the duties of life. The wife to make herself useful, and a joy to the old people. The husband to the duties of his profession. Those were happy days, and they passed swiftly by! Yea, and like earthly joys, generally, they were of short duration. Mother was rapidly failing, and the end drawing near, but she was permitted to take into her arms the first born son of her "baby boy," and nestle him in her bosom. This great sorrow past, another quickly followed. The bugle note of freedom was sounding throughout the South, and her sons are called upon to defend her soil. Wives must give up their husbands, mothers their sons. Fathers must buckle on their swords and lead their sons in battle. Terrible test of the patriotism of the South! They made the sacrifice, and I trust that some day soon, a monument

will be raised to commemorate the loyalty, devotion, and patriotism of Southern wives and mothers! These were dark days of trial, and I could see that my young wife was suffering intensely. One day I told her I was ashamed to stay at home any longer. She said with firm, but trembling voice, "Husband, if you think it is your duty to go into the army *now*, go. You must discharge your duty!"

It was bravely spoken! But what I might have expected from a lineal descendant of a Revolutionary sire, for she is a great-granddaughter of Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene, and the blood of the patriot was in her veins.

In one month my company was ready, and offered to the Governor, and in a few days I was ordered to repair to Iuka, Miss., to enter Camp of Instruction.

My history for four years as a Confederate soldier, can be found in a small volume, entitled "*The Confederate Soldier*," written in 1901, at the request of some of the boys I had the honor of enlisting and commanding in the great struggle, and whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the Reunion in Memphis, Tenn., in May, 1901. Forty years had passed and the boys were gray-headed, and most of them grandfathers. Time had wrought great changes in us, but our hearts were as warm and loyal as when we parted at Appomattox in 1865. I will only state here that I served through the contest, first as an officer of the line, then as surgeon of the Forty-second Mississippi Regiment to the close of the struggle. To say I was thankful to get home would not express my feelings. And when I tell you, that no death had occurred in the family, either white or black, during these years of trial, you can appreciate what debt of praise and gratitude we owed to our covenant-keeping God! After the very natural rejoicing and congratulations were

over, a very difficult problem presented itself for solution, namely, How am I to make a living for my little family? It was too late to think of farming; I had no medicine nor instruments to commence the practice of surgery and medicine; I had no money! My sole dependence was a blind Canadian mare, that the Yankee Cavalry would not have, but she was a splendid saddler, and could be ridden in safety in daylight, and light nights. But how shall I do without medicine? I rode myself down trying to find some man who had money. My father, brother, and a half dozen men told me to find a man who had money, and they would get it for me. It is hard to understand the condition to-day. Those who had money, had kept it a profound secret so long they were still afraid of letting it be known; and the country also was poverty stricken. One evening, almost in despair, I turned my face homeward. I had hunted the country over for a week, and was disheartened and weary. As I neared home, I determined to look cheerful and not distress my wife, who met me at the gate with a letter in her hand. "Here is a letter a negro boy brought this evening." I tore it open and read:

"Dear Jim:—I heard to-day that you were looking for money to enable you to commence the practice of your profession; I haven't got a cent, but I have a bale of fine cotton, hid in the brush, that the Yanks didn't find. Send up and get it.

Yours,

W."

Thank God for friends! I never felt more like shouting in my life! The problem was solved!

I was afraid to go to Memphis, for I would have to swallow the infamous "Amnesty Oath," so my brother



kindly proffered to carry my cotton into Memphis, and purchase my medical supplies. My bale brought me \$154, and my supply of medicine came back packed in a candle-box. Quinine cost me *only* \$15 per ounce, and a small pocket case of instruments \$35. That is sufficient to remember we were paying for our *treason*!

On the 25th of June I rode down to my location, Tyro, Miss., with my precious stock of medicine and launched into practice.

The prospect was gloomy, indeed! The people were intensely poor, many of them stripped of everything. Provisions of every kind high and scarce. Everybody was making a new start in life, and scuffling for his daily bread. Nobody felt able to board me with my wife and child, and I began to look a place for the doctor and his horse, as I soon realized that I would have to be separated from wife and child. This was a hard pill to swallow. I finally secured board for myself and horse at \$27 per month. In December, I rented a place on the outskirts of the village, and on the 15th, moved down, and commenced housekeeping for the first time since our marriage. It was with thankful hearts that we knelt together that night and invoked the blessing of God upon us and our first home.

Christmas soon came, and many of our dear kindred and friends visited us, and brought many substantial presents of real value to the young housekeepers. Mount Paran, Presbyterian Church, in two miles of us, secured, about this time, a supply, and a sacramental meeting was announced for the first Sabbath of April. They had had but little preaching during the years of strife, and the Rev. James Naylor was coming to take charge of a group of famishing churches in the Presbytery. When the meeting day arrived, and an opportunity was given for



reception of members, I walked up to the front seat, and, to my astonishment and delight, my wife came right after me. I stated that I was a member of Chulahoma Church, and had been for fifteen years; that my wife was a member of Calvary Episcopal Church, Memphis, Tenn. We were cordially welcomed to the little flock. Two months later I was honored by being elected and installed a ruling elder in this little church, which I tried to serve faithfully for about fifteen years.

We have had seven children born to us. Frank Small, James Compton, Bourdon, Adrian Campbell, Clara Elizabeth and Peyton Rhea. The two last are living, James Compton and Bourdon died in infancy. Our first-born, Frank, in 1876, age fifteen. He was a precious, noble boy, had never given his parents any trouble, obedient, quiet, truthful, loved to attend church, always in his place at Sunday-school, and loved his Bible and read it daily. But I made the mistake of my life, a common mistake of parents. I never talked with my boy of his soul's salvation, and I have only the Covenant promise of my God to comfort me, and I am devoutly thankful for that.

Adrian Campbell—named for my two nephews who were killed in battle, one at Gettysburg, the other on Missionary Ridge—was a noble son, and the darling of his mother's heart. He died away from home. He had been called to Senatobia, Miss., to take charge of a drug store, and we reluctantly let him go, believing the change would benefit his health, which had been bad for several months. About the time we were expecting a letter, a telegram came, calling me to his bedside. I shall never forget that long, horrid ride, nor the fervent prayers I offered in his behalf. God was gracious, and I reached him in time to hear from his own lips, a bright profession of his

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he had no fear of dying. Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!!

Our two living children, Clara E. and Peyton Rhea, are good children, and have never been separated from us for any length of time, and we hope never will. Both gave their hearts to the Saviour, early in life, about the age of fifteen. They are not so consecrated and Bible-loving as we would have them, but we feel assured that the Lord will perfect the good work in their young hearts.

In 1882, we bid adieu to old friends and associations in Mississippi and moved to Alma, Ark., and again engaged in the practice of my profession. We found a small congregation of Presbyterians, who had services twice a month, but no church building. In the winter of 1884, we began to talk up a church, and finding one of the elders favorably inclined, we went to work in earnest. And after purchasing a suitable lot, made a contract for \$1,200, one-third to be paid when lumber was all on the ground, one-third when building was inclosed, and balance when completed.

It required a good deal of faith, but we put our necks to the yoke, and humbly and earnestly asking the Divine blessing and guidance, moved forward.

On the 15th of November, 1885, our handsome new church was dedicated, "free of debt," just forty years after my father's new church in Chulahoma, Miss., was dedicated, which was built pretty much in the same way. A great deal of faith in God, and honest, hard, persevering work prosecuted to a finish.—Amen!

## CHAPTER XV.

I close this history of my father's family, with a short sketch of the wife of my bosom; the partner of my joys and sorrows; the companion who has walked by my side for nearly forty-five years to comfort and encourage me. She is a remarkable woman, in *many* respects. She, naturally, has a strong retentive mind, which has been stored with knowledge, by a constant course of reading since childhood. She reads almost everything, literature, medicine, history, etc. I consider her my encyclopedia of general knowledge, and often consult her when in trouble, even about my sick patients. She is an excellent nurse, and has always shown willingness to go to the assistance of the afflicted.

She is, and always has been a general favorite in the family. And Aunt "Bet" is often sent for in times of trouble. And many of them have felt the touch of her magic hand, and her cheering, assuring voice in the sick chamber. That voice has comforted me and cheered me all along the journey of our married life, and will cheer me to the end. She is very fond of music, and in her young days, was considered a fine musician, and possessed an exceptionally fine voice, suited to Sacred music, and was for years organist of the church choir.

She is very fond of the old songs of our childhood, and especially fond of the old Scotch ballads taught her by her grandmother, and as she works, she sings, and she is always at work with her needle or machine. She is singing now as she plies her machine in an adjoining room. Listen:

"John Anderson, my Jo John,  
We clamb the hill thegither,  
An mony a canty time John;  
We've hed wi ane anither,  
But we mon totter doon John;  
But han in han we'll go  
And sleep thegither at the foot,  
John Anderson, my Jo!"

Yes, we are tottering down the hill of life, darling,  
and will soon reach the foot, and then we will rest!

## CHAPTER XVI.

## REFLECTIONS.

I have finished the history of the family, and what do I find? Ample cause for gratitude to God for His goodness and mercy to my father and his household!

And we can testify with the Psalmist, that "Goodness and mercy" have followed us all the days of our lives, and that we will "dwell in the house of the Lord forever." I find a family of religious people. Not one who is over twenty-five years of age, who is not a member of the Church of God; and one, only one, who put off the important decision, until she was thirty-five years of age. All have given their hearts to the Saviour early in life.

"A flower offered in the bud, is no mean sacrifice," proving the verity of the precious promise, "They that seek me early shall find me." Why has God been so Gracious? Is there a cause for it? I think so, and I think I *know*. I am justified in thus believing from the teaching of God's holy word. And it is of the utmost importance that we carefully consider the cause. Where do I place it? In the early training of the children in the *Home*, around mother's and father's knees! The venerated heads of the family commenced life with good constitutions, believing that the "chief end of man, is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever," and taking the Bible as their "Magna charta" they taught it to their children from earliest infancy, teaching them reverence for God, and their parents, his holy word, and sanctuary. Thus they grew up in a religious atmosphere, breathing and inhaling it from their infancy, and we have the results of their early, persistent training. Look around you at the families you are intimate with. Where

do you find the best governed, the most obedient children, the happiest households? Where you find the most religion and consecration in the *home*, around the fire-side, among the children, where the beautiful Bible stories are told over and over again to the little ones, to encourage them in the reading and study of God's holy word.

One pound of religion in the *home* is worth a bushel on the street corner. A bright, worldly young lady was eating at my table. She innocently asked my wife, "Do you ask a blessing every time you eat?" "Yes," said my wife, "and we have family worship night and morning." "Well, well," she said, "I am surprised to hear it! Papa never asks a blessing unless we have company, and never has prayers, unless we have a preacher with us." What a sad observation for a child to make! What a dark picture of the home life! And, I almost tremble to state the fact, that father was a noted, brilliant preacher of the Gospel. One of the few men in his church, I ever knew to receive the degree of D. D. for his profound scholarship and learning. Not one of that man's children was a professing Christian. And they seemed to care very little for religion, or religious services.

God pity the Christian father who lives in such way, as to cause his children to doubt the sincerity of his religious profession, or doubt the truth or power of the Gospel! What shall I say of the mother, she who forms the character of the child, and the coming man? Whose influence is felt all through life. What ought your daily life to be, mother? Ah, what?

Is the world growing better or worse? This is a hard question to answer. I have recently heard it discussed from the pulpit, and the preacher's verdict was, that it is growing better. I hope he was correct, for I am satis-

fied there is great room for improvement. I believe that the world is the same, but, people, Christian people, have changed very much in the last decade, or quarter of a century. They have got into a *rush*. They seem to be afraid that they won't, or can't, make a living for their families. And they have no time for anything but their business. They seem to forget the Lord "feeds the young ravens when they cry."

A good brother said to me, "I have not actually time to read my Bible." He was then hurrying to his place of merchandise. "Have the days grown shorter?" I said. "No, they are still twenty-four hours in length." Aren't all the twenty-four hours yours?" "Yes." This spirit of rush, hurry, worry, is not only seen on the streets, but in all the vocations of life. You find it in our homes. Fathers have no time to read the Bible, and have family worship, Mothers have no time to teach their children, and the little tots are turned over to the kindergarten department of the public schools, and on Sabbath morning they are hurried off to Sunday-school where the teacher strives for thirty or forty minutes to teach them the lessons they ought to have been taught at home during the week. And this is all the religious instruction the little ones get. What will be the result upon the coming generation? Is it not a sad subject to contemplate?

There is another gloomy subject I wish you to consider. I think it is the great sin of the day. It is *gamb-ling*. You find it everywhere, and it has not only become fashionable, but the Devil has almost succeeded in making it respectable. The most reputable mén in the community, men who would not be caught playing cards or games of chance, think it all right to deal in *futures*. And they not only gamble in cotton, but corn, wheat,



meat, etc. The food furnished by our Heavenly Father for his needy and dependent creatures. Can you conceive of a greater sin than this? Yet many professing Christians are guilty of this fascinating and fashionable sin. There seems to be a natural *cultivated* desire among the people to get something for nothing. You see it among all classes. This wicked, sinful desire is the root of all gambling, and as we find it in every heart, and at all ages, the only place we can successfully fight the evil is in the nursery, *the home*.

The child ought to be taught that it is a horribly blighting sin, and to shun it as a deadly viper. After they grow up to any size, it will be too late, for they are confronted with the evil everywhere they go. Even when they enter a store to purchase a package of candy, the merchant gives them a ticket with a number upon it, telling them to be sure to keep their tickets, and if they get a certain number, it will entitle them to that air gun, or to that beautifully dressed doll, thus feeding, developing that innate, sinful desire to get something for nothing. When they grow older they meet with the vice in its most fascinating form on the ground where the baseball and football teams meet to have their weekly contests. These contests attract large crowds of people, especially the young. These are veritable gambling hells on a small scale. The young men and boys betting on their favorite players, and on their favorite teams. I write what I know, and testify to what I have both seen and heard, and I give these contests a wide berth now. Fifteen or twenty years ago it was not so. These contests are a disgrace to our civilization, and ought to be outlawed, if such a thing is possible. And Christian parents ought to take some action upon this crying evil. Your boys are being led into dangerous ways, and are learning and being educated in dangerous practices.

Another crying evil of our day, is the desecration of the holy Sabbath. And this sin, we are forced to believe, is as rapidly on the increase as the vice of gambling. We see it sometimes asserted in the religious press, that we are in danger of losing the Christian Sabbath, the American Sabbath. God pity us, if such a calamity should ever befall our country. I wish to speak of this horrible sin only in the Christian home, and beseech Christian fathers and mothers to "come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." If every Christian parent in this land of ours will only put his shoulder to the wheel, and control this sin in his own family, the current will soon change in the opposite direction. Unfortunately, many professing Christians will tell you that the "Sabbath was made for man," and they have a right to use it as they please. You find them at the post office on the Sabbath, eagerly seeking their mails, and many of them become so much interested in their papers that they forget, or neglect the services of God's house. Every Christian living in and around Alma who visited the great "World's Fair," in St. Louis, started on Saturday evening. By this means they saved a whole day. Will a man rob God? Again, look at the Sabbath evening buggy-riding of the young people of your town. This is a crying evil! and a very dangerous practice.

Parents alone can control this. Will you do it? You may "save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

"I know my servant Abraham, that he will commend his house."

## CHAPTER XVII.

## CONCLUSION.

John Bunyan, on looking out through Bedford jail, saw the officers of the law, forcing a drunken, blasphemous wretch along the street to prison. The great heart of the Christian was touched by the passing specimen of depravity, and he exclaimed, "But for the grace of God, there goes John Bunyan!" He saw the wickedness of the human heart in its natural state, and was impressed with the "exceeding sinfulness of sin." He thought of the period in his own life, when he was a stranger to God and the "covenant of promise," a sinner unsaved, and his soul was filled with love and gratitude to God for leading him to that "fountain opened in the house of David for sin, and uncleanness," for taking his feet out of the miry clay and placing them upon the "Rock." And he ascribed all the praise and glory of his salvation to Jesus.

"But for the grace of God" what a different history might have been written of my father's family!

A short time ago, on a lovely evening, as twilight was closing the day, a horrible tragedy was enacted in the quiet little town of Alma, that will illustrate the point I wish to emphasize.

A little after dusk, three married men and an eighteen-year-old boy crossed the railroad which runs through the center of the town, and entered the premises, or barn lot of an old man, who, with his wife and sons was finishing up the labors of the day; the father and mother milking the cows, the sons feeding the stock. The object was to avenge an imaginary insult which the demon whisky had magnified into a horrible crime.

The assault was made upon the youngest son, the elder son witnessed the assault, and rushed to his brother's assistance, and closed in combat with a brother of the assailant, and stabbed him in the heart. In a moment a pistol shot rang out upon the air, and was quickly followed by another, which brought every man and woman in town to their doors or the street, as this was the usual fire alarm. In a moment the piercing shrieks of the old mother paralyzed or excited every one, and many, both male and female, rushed to the scene of action, and found two men lying on the ground in a dying condition, and two others badly wounded and covered with blood. Before they could realize what had happened, one was dead. And the screams of his young wife, who had rushed with others to the spot, were added to those of the agonized mother, whose son lived but a few hours longer. The whole town was shocked by the terrible tragedy, and there was little sleeping done that night in Alma. Three days ago, three of the four men mentioned were indicted by the grand jury for murder in the first degree, and are to-day, while I am writing, on trial for their lives,\* and nearly half of the town people are at court as witnesses, away from home, exposed to the inclement weather, besides, the mortification of appearing in the court room, filled with curious spectators, to give evidence in a horrible murder case. Oh, what sorrow, distress, inconvenience, and suffering sin produces!

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\* This horrible tragedy spoken of in the papers as the "Alma Tragedy," shocked the feelings of our people to such an extent that, in the State election which soon followed, we voted whisky and the saloon out of the County by four hundred majority, for the first time in the history of the County; and in two succeeding elections have increased that majority to 800, and we have no fears of its return in the future.

"Think you these men were sinners above all men," because they did these things? "I tell you nay." The secular papers stated that they belonged to prominent families. They represent a class of people, a very large class of people: the ungodly, the wicked! The lines delineated in this family history also represent a class of people. They were men of like passions with these naturally. They were no better than these, no worse. What makes the difference? The one living under the benign influence of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, the other under the dominion of sin, and "led captive of the devil at his will."

To which class do you belong, reader? "Choose ye this day whom you will serve." Accept the "free gift" of your Father in heaven: the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, which makes a gentleman out of a savage, a Christian out of a Hottentot, a saint out of a sinner which enables, uplifts and beautifies our poor human nature, gives us a new heart, and precious hope of heaven. Then we can sing with the spirit and understanding:

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me;  
I once was lost, but now I'm found,  
Was blind, but now I see;  
Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
We have already come;  
'Tis grace that brought us safe thus far,  
And grace will take us home!

—Amen.



















